THE MARIOLOGY
OF
SAINT JOHN DAMASCENE

BY

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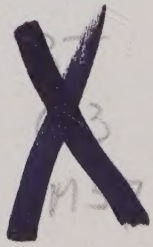

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TO THE AUTHOR OF THE ENCYCLICAL

"RERUM ORIENTALIUM"

OUR GLORIOUSLY REIGNING PONTIFF

PIUS XI

ON THE OCCASION

OF THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE PROCLAMATION

OF THE DOGMA

OF THE

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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PREFACE

THE recent encyclical letter "Rerum Orientalium" (1) will, no doubt, be the starting point of an increased interest in the Eastern Churches. The Sovereign Pontiff is convinced that a "more extensive knowledge of Oriental affairs among Westerners would conduce to the fostering of mutual love and respect." (2) To this effect he encourages, among other things, the publication of works dealing with the religious history of the Orient. (3) It is for this reason that the present work has been dedicated to the Holy Father.

In the field of patrology, the Christian Orient presents no Father more worthy of being studied than St. John Damascene. His summary of the teachings of his predecessors and of the first six œcumenical councils marks the high point of Greek theology, for, a century after his death, the Greek schism paralyzed all further development. *De Fide Orthodoxa* has remained the standard of Greek theology for more than a thousand years. (4) It is through this work of the Damascene that the Scholastics

(1) *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 10 Sept. 1928. Vol. xx, pp. 277-288. The English translation here cited is to be found in the *Ecclesiastical Review*, January 1929, vol. 80, pp. 62-74.

(2) *Eccl. Rev.*, loc. cit., p. 66; *Acta*, p. 281.

(3) *Eccl. Rev.*, loc. cit., p. 73; *Acta*, p. 287.

(4) Since the Damascene, no Greek theologian has treated the whole field of dogmatic theology. (*Theologia Dogmatica Christianorum Orientalium*. M. JUGIE, Paris, 1926, t. I, p. 399).

came into contact with the theology of the Greek Church. No effort at the reunion of the Oriental Churches with Rome can ignore the writings of the Doctor of Damascus. Considering his importance, it is surprising that so few monographs have set forth his teachings.

The present work is an attempt at a synthesis of the Marian doctrines of the Damascene. By uniting the data selected from all his writings, it has been possible to reconstruct a fairly complete treatise of Mariology. The purpose which the author had in view in the composition of this work was to advance the history of dogma in this special field. It is only after a number of monographs of this type have been composed that an exact history of the development of Marian doctrine can be written.(1)

The Marialogy of St. John Damascene, furthermore, shows the complete agreement between the faith of the Greek and Roman Churches on this point. It should, therefore prove useful toward the realization of the Holy Father's fond hope, that the most kind Redeemer of men, Jesus Christ, "will finally lead His sheep [of the Eastern Churches] back to the one fold to be governed by the one Shepherd, especially since so large a part of Divine Revelation has been most piously preserved among

(1) Canon BITTREMIEUX twice takes occasion to encourage studies of this kind in his book, *De Mediatione Universali* (See Bibliography).

He says, speaking of strengthening the argument from Tradition: "Ad hoc magnopere conferunt speciales eæ de uno aliove Traditionis teste inquisitiones, quæ recentius laudabiliter multiplicatas videmus, quæquæ frequentius adhuc in futuro multiplicandas speramus." Pp. 194 and 213. The Canon's choice of citations from the Damascene is rather unhappy.

these people, and there flourishes among them a sincere allegiance to Christ Our Lord and a special love and devotion to His Virgin Mother." (1)

As regards the order followed, it is that of any Mariological treatise. After a brief sketch of Mary's life based on the details found in St. John's writings, the various Marian doctrines are examined in their customary order. The sources from which the Doctor of Damascus drew have been indicated in the footnotes wherever this could be done with certainty. But since the unexplored field is so vast, (2) and our author has used the writings of so great a number of the preceding Fathers, it has been impossible to indicate all the sources of the Damascene's doctrine. Special attention, however, has been given to the study of the sources of the Assumption, since the Damascene is rightly looked upon as one of the principal authorities for this doctrine.

In order to make the study as objective as possible, citations have been multiplied. In the translation of the original, the author has aimed at fidelity rather than elegance, and has given the Greek terminology wherever it might be of interest. Controverted questions that do not directly tend to clarify the Damascene's doctrine have been treated in the notes.

Before beginning the treatise proper, it will be necessary

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(1) *Eccl. Rev.*, loc. cit., p. 73; *Acta*, p. 287.

(2) Only two monographs dealing with the Mariology of the Greek Fathers have come to our notice: 1. E. NEUBERT: *Marie dans l'Église Anténicéenne*. Paris, 1908. 2. A. EBERLE: *Die Mariologie des Hl. Cyrillus von Alexandrien*. Freiburg im Breisgau, 1921.

to say a few words about the life and works of St. John Damascene in a short introduction.

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The author wishes to express his profound gratitude to the Right Reverend Msgr. J. P. Kirsch, professor of Patrology at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, under whose paternal and encouraging direction this work was undertaken, as well as to the Rev. E. Neubert, S. M., D. D., for his continued interest in its progress. Special thanks are likewise due to Rev. M. Gordillo, S.J., and to Rev. M. Jugie, A.A., of the Oriental Institute at Rome, as well as to Rev. Al. Janssens, C.I.C.M., of Louvain, for their kind attentions. Finally, a word of appreciation is due to Rev. J.N. Dockter, S.M., and to Rev. C.O. Dreisoerner, S.M., for their painstaking criticism of the manuscript of the present study, and to Rev. V.B. Braun, S.M., for kindly undertaking the laborious task of reading this book in proof.

Fribourg, April 12, 1929. V.A.M.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface vii
Bibliography xiii
Introduction xvii
CHAPTER I. *Mary's Life on Earth* 1
A. Genealogy 2
B. Mary's Parents 8
C. Mary's Life 12
CHAPTER II. *The Divine Maternity* 22
A. Meaning of the title: Mother of God . . 23
B. Mary, Mother of the Man-Christ 25
C. Mary, the Mother of God 49
D. Greatness of the Divine Maternity . . . 65
CHAPTER III. *Perpetual Virginity* 80
A. Preparation 81
B. Ante partum 83
C. In partu 86
D. Post partum 89
CHAPTER IV. *The Immaculate Conception: the Eighth Century Tradition* 93
A. The Damascene's Doctrine on Original Sin 95
B. The Immaculate Conception 100
C. Objections 113

CHAPTER V. *Holiness of the Mother of God* . . . 126
A. Mary's Sinlessness 126
B. Mary's Virtues 130
C. Fullness of Grace 133
CHAPTER VI. *The Assumption* 138
A. Reasons for Mary's Death 139
B. The Circumstances of Mary's Death, Burial, and Assumption 147
C. The Assumption 161
CHAPTER VII. *Mary's Mediation: Coredemption and the Distribution of Grace* 170
A. Cooperation in the Redemption 171
B. Mary's Distribution of Grace 179
CHAPTER VIII. *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* . . 194
A. Cult of the Saints 195
B. Cult Due to the Mother of God 199
C. Practice of Devotion to Mary 203
Conclusion 216
General Index 220

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This bibliography contains only the works that have proved most useful in the preparation of the present study Many others are cited in the notes. (See the General Index)

Whenever the bibliographical references in the footnotes are incomplete, the reader will find the complete references in this list.

INTRODUCTION

A. St. John Damascene: His Life

Until recent years, all the biographies of St. John of Damascus were based principally on the Life attributed to a certain John, patriarch of Jerusalem, a work in which it is difficult to distinguish truth from legend. It will be useful, therefore, to reproduce here a brief account of his life, based on the most recent researches. (1) John was born about the year A.D. 675. Together with Cosmas, the orphan child of a near relative and future bishop of Maiouma, he received a thorough education under the direction of a Greek slave whom his father had redeemed. The piety of the tutor made such a deep impression on John and Cosmas, that both renounced worldly riches and honors in order to embrace the monastic life. They made their religious profession in the well-known monastery of St. Sabas, near Jerusalem.

It is probable that St. John visited Constantinople and made the acquaintance of St. Germanus before the outbreak of the iconoclastic heresy. He was ordained

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(1) Our sketch of the life of St. John is based on the following studies:

1. *St. Jean Damascène*, by M. Jugie, A.A.: *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, t. viii, col. 693-696 (1924); and 2. *Damascenica*, by M. Gordillo, S.J.: 1. *Vita Marciana*. Rome, 1926. (*Orientalia Christiana*, Nov. 1926, vol. viii, pp. 41-81).

priest by the patriarch of Jerusalem whom he claims as his friend and teacher. Having probably written his great summa, *"The Source of Knowledge"*, before the Isaurian's attack upon the Church, the Damascene used the vast knowledge acquired in its composition to combat the new heresy. His zeal for our holy faith merited for him the anathemas of the heretics and the blessings of the orthodox. The dogmatic and polemic writings, as well as the liturgical poems of St. John, made him known to the world, with the result that he was called upon to preach in the principal pulpits of the Holy City on the great feasts. He performed this duty so eloquently that a ninth century historian surnamed him Chrysorrhoas (golden stream). He died at an advanced age, probably at St. Sabas', on the fourth of December, A.D. 749. Since his profound humility, his ardent love for Jesus and his tender devotion to Mary, as well as his zeal for the Church, were known to all, St. John Damascene was raised to the altars soon after his death. Pope Leo XIII proclaimed him a Doctor of the Church, fixing his feast on the 27th of March.

A word must be added concerning the story of the cutting off and miraculous restoration of St. John's right hand, an account of which is read in the fourth lesson of matins (1) on the feast of the saint. If it is true that St. John became a monk at an early age, and that he was at St. Sabas' when he wrote his treatises in defense of sacred images, the very basis of the story is removed. Consequently,

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(1) In the Roman Breviary.

both Father Jugie and Father Gordillo reject the story as a mere legend.

B. The Works of St. John Damascene

Within the past few years, two critical studies of the Damascene's writings have been made. In 1923, Dr. Dionys. Stieffenhofer (1) preluded his German translation of *De Fide Orthodoxa* by an extensive introduction dealing with the life and writings of St. John. The following year, Father M. Jugie, published, in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (2), his scholarly article on the Doctor of Damascus. We have accepted the latter's conclusions as to the authenticity of the Damascene's writings as our guide in the present work. The following list includes the works of undoubted authenticity which have been used as sources of this study, together with the manner in which they are cited in the course of this work:

Πηγὴ γνώσεως: Dialectica (PG 94).
De Hæresibus Liber (94. De Hæres. Liber).
Expositio Fidei Orthodoxæ. (94. FO).
Institutio Elementaris ad Dogmata. (95).
Libellus de Recta Sententia. (94. De Rect. Sent. Liber).
Expositio et Declaratio Fidei. (95. Exp. Fidei).
Dissertatio Adversus Nestorianorum Hæresim. (95. I Adv. Nest.)
Dissertatio Adversus Nestorianorum Hæresim. Publish-

(1) *Des Hl. Johannes von Damaskus Genaue Darlegung des Orthodoxen Glaubens.* München, 1923. (Bibliothek der Kirchenväter).
(2) T. viii, col. 693-751. (See Bibliography)

ed by F. Diekamp. See Bibliography. (2 Adv. Nest.).

Tractatus Contra Jacobitas. (94. Contra Jacob.).

De Natura Composita Contra Acephalos. (95. De Nat. Composita).

De Hymno Trisagio. (95).

De Duabus in Christo Voluntatibus. (95. De Duab. Vol.).

Dialogus contra Manichæos. (94. Dial. contra Manich.).

Disputatio cum Manichaeo. (96).

Pro Sacris Imaginibus, Orationes Tres. (94. De Imag.).

The exegetical, moral, and ascetical works of the Damascene contain nothing of interest to this work.

Homilies [1]: (PG 96).

In Transfigurationem. (In Transfig.).

In Ficum Arefactam. (In fic. Aref.).

In Sabbatum Sanctum. (In Sab. Sanct.)

In Nativitatem (Col. 661-680: *Δεῦτε πάντα ἔθνη*: 1 Nativ.).

In Dormitionem, Tres. No. 18 of the second homily is interpolated. (1, 2, 3 Dorm.).

In Laudem S. Johannis Chrysostomi.

Laudatio S. Barbaræ. (Laud. S. Barbaræ).

Hymns and Prayers (PG 96):

In Theogoniam. In Theophaniam.

In Dominicam Paschæ. In Assumptionem D.N.J.C.

In Transfigurationem. In Annuntiationem. (849).

Canon in Dormitionem. (1363. Can. in Dorm.)

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(1) About the Damascene's homilies, Father Jugie says: "Jean fut un prédicateur éloquent et original. Ses discours portent un cachet doctrinal qui les rend parfaitement reconnaissables. On y trouve toujours le théologien de la Trinité et de l'Incarnation... Ses homélies sont certainement ce qu'il a écrit de plus personnel, et elles sont riches de doctrine." D.T.C., t. viii, col. 703.

The following works are probably to be attributed to St. John Damascene, at least indirectly:

De Sancta Trinitate. (95). Its doctrine is contained in authentic works.

Disceptatio Christiani et Saraceni. (94).

Disputatio Saraceni cum Christiano. (96). The latter works seem to be based on the oral teaching of the holy Doctor.

Libellus Orthodoxiæ. See bibliography: *Damascenica.* This profession of faith is a summary of the *Epistola Synodica* of St. Sophronius, with a few additions. Its doctrine is contained in authentic works.

The following works are of doubtful authenticity:

1. Fragment of a sermon on the Blessed Virgin. (96, 816). This fragment is cited in the text because its close resemblance to *Homilia I in Nativitatem* vouches for its authenticity.
2. Homilia in Annuntiationem. This work has been cited only in the footnotes because its authenticity seems more than doubtful. Although most of the thoughts of this homily can be found in the homilies on the Nativity and on the Dormition, two passages are in entire disaccord with the Damascene's teaching:

   a. The overshadowing by the Most High is attributed to the Father (96, 646A), whereas St. John regurlarly attributes it to the Son (FO iii, 2, PG 94, 985B; 1 Adv. Nest. 1, PG 95, 189A). See Langen,

Johannes von Damaskus, Gotha, 1879, p. 219.

b. There is an insistance on Mary's intercessory power which is not found in authentic works. (PG. 96, 646CD and 747A).

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The authenticity of the homily on the Nativity [1] is doubted by many authors. [2] Owing to its importance for our study, we find it necessary to state some of the reasons for accepting it.

1. Rev. M. Jugie accepts it without reserve. [3]

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(1) A propos of this homily, Father Jugie writes: "Rien de plus beau n'a été écrit à la louange de la Mère de Dieu." (*St. Jean Damascène et l'Immaculée Conception: Bessarione*, 1923, p. 3. — Similarly Dom P. B. LEPLUS, O.S.B. wrote in "*La Vie Spirituelle*" (Mars 1925, T. XI, No. 6, p. 589) that St. John Damascene "chanta dans ses homélies les louanges de la Vierge avec une tendresse et une grâce que même un St. Bernard n'a jamais dépassées."

(2) The following authors doubt, or reject the authenticity of the homily in question:

a. O. BARDENHEWER: *Patrologie*, 3d. ed. Freiburg im Br., 1910, p. 509: "Gegen die Echtheit der zwei Homilien auf Maria Geburt sind Bedenken laut geworden."

b. STIEFFENHOFER, *op. cit.*, who bases himself on

c. LANGEN: *Johannes von Damaskus*, Gotha, 1879, p. 224, and on

d. DYOBUNIOTIS: Ἰωάννης ὁ Δαμασκηνός. Athens, 1903, p. 128.

e. LUPTON, in his article on St. John in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*. (Smith and Wace. London, 1882, t. III, p. 409-423).

f. V. ERMONI: *St. Jean Damascène*. Paris, 1904. Note on p. 13.

g. J. TIXERONT: *Précis de Patrologie*. Paris, 1918.

An examination of these authors shows that most of them have simply followed the conclusions of Langen.

(3) When consulted by letter as to his reasons for accepting the homily, Father Jugie replied: "Je l'ai considéré comme authentique jusqu'à nouvel ordre, parce que les raisons dont vous me parlez [the objections of Stieffenhofer], étant toutes d'ordre interne, ne m'ont pas parues apodictiques." The author of the present study wishes to express his sincerest thanks to Father Jugie for this kind attention.

2. Rev. M. Gordillo, author of the *Damascenica* previously cited, considers its authenticity as beyond doubt. (1)

3. The objections brought against the authenticity of this homily are not valid:

a. The two homilies on the Nativity have the same author (Stieffenhofer, Langen).—The manuscripts show the contrary, the second homily being attributed to St. Theodore Studite (2), whilst the first appears under the name of the Damascene. (3)

Consequently, the objection that the second homily uses an argument in favor of holy images which was not yet used at the time of the Damascene (Langen, Stieffenhofer), cannot be held against the first.

b. The relation of the three divine Persons to Mary in 1 *Nativ.* 3, col. 665B, is conceived differently than in *De Fide Orthodoxa* iii, 2, col. 985BC (Langen, Stieffenhofer).—This statement is incorrect as appears from the present work. (4).

c. The manner of speaking of the hymn of the Trisagion in 1 *Nativ.* 10, col. 677AB, contradicts *De Fide Orthodoxa* iii, 10, col. 1020AB (Dyobuniotis).—

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(1) Father Gordillo was likewise consulted by letter. He answered: "Il me semble hors de doute que la première homélie sur la Nativité de la Très Ste. Vierge est bien du Damascène. Elle se trouve dans les code les plus anciens et il n'y a rien qui ne soit tout à fait dans le style du saint Docteur de Damas." Sincerest thanks are likewise expressed to Father Gordillo for his encouraging reply.

(2) Jugie's article: D.T.C., col. 703.

(3) Gordillo, letter cited above.

(4) See Ch. II, B.

A comparison of the texts fails to reveal this opposition. (1)

4. Internal criticism, as both Father Jugie and Father Gordillo have remarked, is entirely in favor of the Damascene. The following rapprochements, some of which are based on the similarity of thought, others on verbal identity, may be made:

Homilia I in Nativitatem (*PG* 96):	*Compare:*
No. 1, 661B: *Εἰ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων*	1 Dorm 4, (96, 705C). 2 Dorm. 15, (741C).
Ibid. C: *τί οὖν τῇ μητρί*	2 Dorm. 1 (724B).
Ibid. C: *λύσιν... τῆς στειρώσεως*	1 Dorm. 5 (708C).
2 and 10 (664A, 677A): *τὸ μόνον καινὸν ὑπὸ τὸν ἥλιον*	FO iii, 1 (94, 984B).
2, 664A: Anna means grace	1 Dorm.5 (708C). FO iv. 14 (94, 1157B).
Ibid. B: *δῶρον... πάντων ὑπερφερέστερον*	1 Dorm. 4 (705C).
3, 664B: *τῆς οὐρανῶν εὐρυκωρίας πλατύτερον*	1 Dorm. 13 (720AB).
Ibid. B: *ἄφραστον καὶ συγκαταβατικὴν σάρκωσιν*	FO iii, 1 (94, 984B).
3 and 6, 665A and 669D: *ὡς ἑαυτοῦ δακτύλῳ τῷ Πνεύματι*	3 Dorm. 2, (756D).
3, 665B: Jacob's ladder, means of the Word's descent	1 Dorm. 8 (721D). 3 Dorm. 2 (753D).

(1) Gordillo, letter cited above.

Ibid. B: *Εὐδοκία... τοῦ Πατρός*	2 Dorm. 3 (728B). FO iv, 14 (94, 1160B).
Ibid. B: *οἱονεὶ θεῖον σπόρον... τὸν Υἱόν*	FO iii, 22 (94, 985B). 1 Adv. Nest. 43 (95, 221C).
4, 668A: Reference to the virgin in Isaias, similar to	1 Dorm. 9 (713B).
5, 668B: *καὶ νῷ καὶ ψυχῇ καὶ σώματι ἀειπαρθενεύουσαν*	FO iv, 14 (94, 1160A). 1 Dorm. 7 (709B).
6, 669B: *κρίνου... ῥόδον*	3 Dorm. 5 (761A).
Ibid. B: *ἐτέχθη... ἐν ἁγίᾳ Προβατικῇ*	FO iv, 14 (94, 1157B).
Ibid. C: *τὸ ὄρος κυρίου*	1 Dorm. 9 (713B).
6, 672A: Mary is the reality which the figures represented	3 Dorm. 2 (756D).
7, 672A: *τόμον καινόν*	FO iv, 14 (94, 1160B).
7 and 3, 672B and 665B: A thought peculiar to the Damascene: *νύμφην θεοῦ*	2 Dorm. 14 (741B).
7, 672D: *τὴν ἀπαρχὴν... φυράματος*	1 Dorm. 3 (704A).
8, 673A: *τἀναντία... τῶν ἐναντίων ἰάματα*	In Fic. Aref. 2, (96, 577C). 2 Dorm. 19 (752C).
9, 676A: *ἔμψυχον ἄγαλμα*	3 Dorm. 5 (761A).
Ibid. B: Conception through hearing	FO iv, 14 (94, 1161A).
10, 677B: *μονογενὴς... πρωτότοκον*	3 Dorm. 2 (756A).

12, 680B: Conclusion, compare ..... { 1 Dorm. 14 (721AB). 3 Dorm. 5 (761C).

5. St. John Damascene's homilies on the Dormition [1] show a dependence on the *Encomium in B. Virginem* of St. Modestus of Jerusalem. [2] The same dependence is evident in the homily on the Nativity:

1 Nativ. 1 (96, 661C): *Δι' αὐτῆς γὰρ ὁ Κτίστης πᾶσαν φύσιν πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον...*

Encomium VII (PG 86bis, col. 3293BC:) *δι' ἧς ἀνεκαινίσθη τὰ σύμπαντα...*

1 Nativ. 2 (664B): *οὐρανὸν... τῆς οὐρανῶν εὐρυχωρίας πλατύτερον...*

Encomium VIII (3293C): *πρὸς τὴν ὑψηλοτέραν εὐρυχωροτέραν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ...*

1 Nativ. 4 (668A): *τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς πορφύραν περιβαλλόμενος...*

Encomium XIII (3309B): *τὴν τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν πορφύραν...*

Since the arguments against the homily on the Nativity are without foundation, and since the arguments in its favor seem well grounded, we have used it unhesitatingly in this study.

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(1) See chapter VI of this work.
(2) BG 86 bis, col. 3277-3312.

C. The Importance of St. John Damascene in Greek Theology

The importance of St. John Damascene in Greek theology is universally recognized. Although his was not, primarily, an original spirit, his genius for the systematization of the doctrines of the preceding centuries has merited for him the title of the First of the Schoolmen.

Father Gordillo, S.J., thus introduces his study on the *Vita Marciana:* "It would be superfluous to extol the weight of the authority of St. John Damascene, as well as his importance in cementing a union between Catholics and Dissidents. No one is ignorant of the fact that the Damascene is the common teacher of both, and that he is held in equal veneration by all, because he has set forth in a compendium complete in every respect, the doctrine of the ancient Greek Fathers; wherefore, Father de Regnon (1) wrote with reason: 'In order to arrive at a reunion [of the churches], it will be necessary for the Catholic Church to use the Source of Knowledge of St. John Damascene together with the Summa of Aquinas.'" (2)

The words which J. Bilz wrote in the introduction to his study on the Holy Trinity according to the Damascene may be applied as well to the holy Doctor's Mariology: "The significance of St. John of Damascus, his high es-

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(1) Th. de Regnon, S.J., *Études de Théologie Positive sur la Ste. Trinité*, t. iii, part. 1, p. 51.

(2) *Damascenica*, Prologus, p. [5]. (*Orientalia Christiana*, Nov. 1926, Vol. viii, p. 45).

timation in the Greek Church whose doctrinal development he brought to a conclusion through his principal work, (1) and for which he always remains the standard dogmatist, as well as his influence on Western Scholasticism for which he became the intermediary of the Greek Tradition, and a model in the systematic development of theology, seem to justify the dedication of a special study to the exposition of his doctrine on the Trinity." (2)

Finally, to add but one more testimony to the preceding, Father Jugie concludes an interesting comparison of the Greek Doctor with the Angel of the Schools, in the following words: "All in all, John is a limpid brook, carrying gold, [it is true], but whose flow is not abundant; Thomas is a broad stream which has known the brook amongst its tributaries." (3)

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(1) The Πηγὴ γνώσεως.

(2) *Die Trinitätslehre des Hl. Johannes von Damaskus*, Page. v.

(3) D.T.C., t. viii, col. 751: "Au demeurant, Jean est un ruisselet limpide, charriant de l'or, mais peu abondant; Thomas est un fleuve aux larges bords, qui a connu le ruisselet parmi ses affluents."

THE MARIOLOGY
OF
SAINT JOHN DAMASCENE

CHAPTER I

MARY'S LIFE ON EARTH

BEFORE entering upon a discussion of Mary's privileges, which naturally constitutes the major part of a Mariology, a historical sketch of her life here below, based on the writings of St. John Damascene, will be of interest. The holy Doctor approaches the subject with the love and admiration which have merited for him a place among the great servants of Mary. But, limited by the scanty documents which have reached us, the picture will necessarily be incomplete. Nearly all of the data pertaining to Mary's life are to be found in the fourteenth chapter of the fourth book of *De Fide Orthodoxa*, in the sermon on the Nativity, and in the first sermon on the Assumption.

In each of the above documents, St. John uses the apocrypha (1), but far more critically than many of his predecessors, and most of his immediate successors. With a clear appreciation of the dignity of the Mother

(1) M. JUGIE, in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, in the article: *St. Jean Damascène*, t. viii, col. 737, says: "Il connaît sans doute les apocryphes et les utilise sans aucun scrupule, mais, avec un sens assez juste de la critique, il a soin d'écarter tout ce qui paraît trop invraisemblable." Cf. also JANSSENS, *De Heilige Maagd*, p. 68. As a matter of fact, St. John could have found all that he tells us about Mary's life in the writings of the Fathers who preceded him, but considering the widespread diffusion of the "Gospel of James", there is no reason for believing that he did not consult it at first hand. All the historical details which he gives us may be found in the apocrypha.

of God and the mature reflection of the theologian that he was, to guide him, he accepts those details of the "Gospel of James" (1) which harmonize readily with the accounts of the authentic gospels, whilst he rejects its extravagances. His dependence on the apocrypha of the Assumption will be considered when treating that question (2). The influence of the apocrypha is purely historical, in no way touching our author's Marian doctrine (3).

Before her birth, Mary's future glory was foretold by the prophets, and foreshadowed by persons and objects in the Old Testament. Since her dignity is constantly brought into evidence by these types and figures, their consideration will also be reserved to a later chapter (4).

Three points, therefore, remain to be considered here: the genealogy, the parents, and the spotless life of the Mother of God.

A. Genealogy

Like the fathers who preceded him, and using the same arguments, and often nearly the identical words (5), St.

(1) The "*Gospel of James*", an apocryphal account of the life of Mary from her birth till the massacre of the Holy Innocents, was written before A.D. 200. Because of its pleasing style and its attractive and edifying content it was much read during later centuries. (Rauschen, *Grundriss*, p. 40).

(2) In Ch. VI.

(3) In his book: *De Heilige Maagd*, Fr. Al. Janssens proves that the Catholic doctrines concerning the Virgin Mary are in no way based on the apocrypha. His conclusion is formulated on page 276.

(4) Ch. II, D.

(5) See, for example, Eberle, *Die Mariologie des Hl. Cyrillus von Alexandrien*, pp. 7-20, for St. Cyril of Alexandria; Pseudo-Eustathius, *Comment. in Hexam.*, PG 18, c. 772; St. Andrew of Crete, *In Nativ.* B. M. II, PG 97, c. 823 A, and especially, *In Nativ. B. M.* III, ibid. 856 A; etc.

John Damascene upholds the Davidical descent of Mary. His first proof is indirect, but certain, since it is based on the Inspired Word. The promised Messias was to be of the house of David; therefore, since He was born of a virgin, the latter must necessarily be a descendant of the royal prophet. Our author summarizes this argument in his *Expositio Fidei* as follows: "Since He [the Word] had a Father in heaven, He was born of a woman —of a virgin, without a father; for it was impossible that one person should be born of two fathers. Wherefore, since it was in accord with the pleasure of His Father, the Son of God was, in a way known to Himself, conceived without the marital relation, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, who, as is recounted in Scripture, was born of the root of Jesse, of the tribe of Juda, of the family of David, and of the seed of Abraham." (1) Where the Scriptures give this information is indicated in the fourteenth chapter of Book IV of *De Fide Orthodoxa*, where the question of Mary's ancestry is treated *ex professo*. "In the predetermined time, she [the holy Mother of God] arose out of the root of David according to what was promised to him: 'The Lord hath sworn truth to David, and he will not make it void: of the fruit of thy womb I will set upon thy throne.'" (2) Other citations are adduced to the same effect. (3)

(1) *Expos. Fidei*, viii (PG 95, c. 426C). For the manner of citing the Damascene's works, see p. xix.

(2) Ps. 131, 11. The quotations from Holy Scripture are given according to the Douay Version unless the Damascene's text differs considerably. Here, for example, he has μὴ ἀθετήσει αὐτόν for αὐτήν (LEQUIEN), probably a slip of the copyist's pen.

(3) Ps. 88, 36, and Is. 11, 1. De FO iv, 14 (PG 94, 1156 A);

The second proof, also indirect, is drawn from the marriage with St. Joseph. It is briefly but forcefully stated by the Damascene (1): "The holy evangelists Matthew (2) and Luke have clearly shown that Joseph was of the family (3) of David; but Matthew traces Joseph from David through Solomon, whilst Luke does so through Nathan. Both are silent about the parentage of the holy Virgin.

"We must know that it is not the custom among the Hebrews, nor in the Sacred Scriptures, to give the genealogies of women. But there was a law (4) that no tribe should take a wife from another tribe (5). Now Joseph, who was of the Davidical family, and who was a just man (the holy Gospel testifies this of him), would not, contrary to the law, have married the holy Virgin, if she had not been of the same sceptre. It sufficed, therefore, to have shown the abode [i.e., the genealogy] of Joseph." (6)

In order that this argument be valid, it must be true: first, that Mary was an heiress; secondly, that the law required marriage not only within the same tribe, but

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Cf. 2 Adv. Nest. 29, *Theolog. Quartolschr.* 1901, p. 573.

(1) Compare St. Andrew of Crete: *In Nativ. B. M.* III, PG 97, c. 856 A. The passage presents a great similarity. The same is true of other parts of this homily.

(2) The following passages, as well as the genealogies are reproduced in the *Roman Breviary*, in the lessons of the III nocturn of the feast of St. Joachim, Aug. 16.

(3) φυλῆς: The Septuagint uses two words here, and in the law referred to below, namely, δῆμος and φυλή which facilitate the distinction between family and tribe.

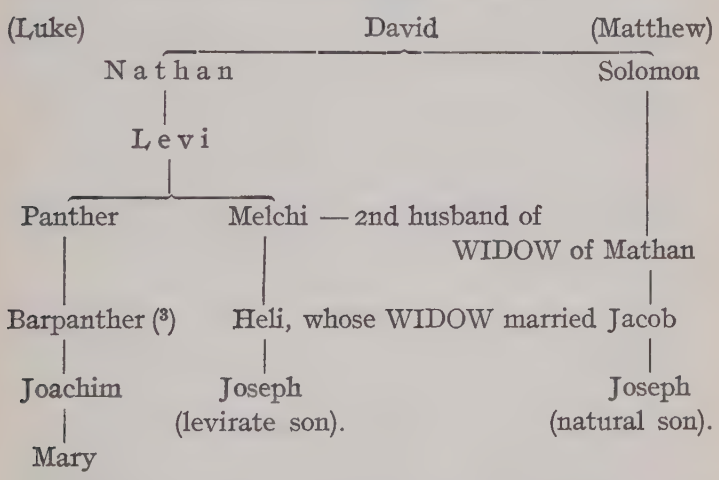
(4) Num. 36, 6 ff.

(5) μὴ μνηστεύεσθαι φυλὴν ἐξ ἑτέρας φυλῆς.

(6) FO iv, 14 (94, 1156 B).

also within the same family. Since the Damascene considered the Blessed Virgin an only child, the first condition was evidently fulfilled. Cornelius a Lapide (1) proves that the law did, in fact, require marriage within the same family; that this was also our author's view seems probable from a glance at the Septuagint version of the law referred to above, which he had in hand.

Finally, there is a direct proof: Mary is a descendant of David through Nathan. Our author's explanations (2) may be reduced to the following diagram:



(1) CORNELIUS A LAPIDE, *Commentaria in Sacram Scripturam*, Ed. Vives. Paris, 1861, vol. 2, p. 387, Nota: "Ex Hebræo colligitur filias, deficiente prole mascula, hæredes, debuisse nubere non tantum in eadem tribu, sed etiam *in eadem familia proxima*, ne earum hæreditas transiret ad exteras familias, sed maneret in familia patris, consanguineis qui ad eam jus habebant."

(2) FO iv, 14 (94, 1156 D).

(3) Note the text: τὸν βαρπάνθηρα, οὕτως ἐπικληθέντα

The convergence of the two genealogies in St. Joseph need not detain us here. First presented by Julius Africanus, it has been reproduced without change by many of the Fathers. (1) The question, furthermore, is studied by most commentators of the Gospels, and is the subject of more than one monograph. (2)

A number of authors (3) have noted that the Damascene makes Melchi the son of Levi, whereas the Gospel of St. Luke (4) gives the exact reverse. M. J. Ryan suggests a slip of the pen, either on the part of the author, or of his copyists as an explanation. Maas (5) substitutes Mathat for Melchi on the plea that the text used by the Damascene omitted the two generations separating Heli from Melchi. This reason does not hold, for the name of Levi appears in the above schema.

It would seem more probable, that, to preserve the concordance of Africanus which he considered the best solution of the problem, our author simply replaced Mathat

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(1) JULIUS AFRICANUS, as cited by EUSEBIUS: H. E.; I, vii, 5; PSEUDO-EUSTATHIUS, *Comment. in Hexam.* PG 18, c. 772; ST. GREG. NAZ., *Carmina* xviii, 26 ff: *De Christi Genealogia*, PG 37, c. 482; ST. ANDREW OF CRETE, *Oratio VI: In Circum. Domini*, PG 97, c. 916 BC.

(2) For example, P. VOGT: *Der Stammbaum Christi bei den Hl. Evangelisten Matthäus und Lukas.* Freiburg im Br., 1907. This work cites a very extensive literature. HEER, *Die Stammbäume Jesu nach Matthäus und Lukas.* Freiburg im Br., 1910; the various *Lives of Christ, etc.*

(3) SUAREZ, *Opera Omnia*, De naturali perfectione et origine B.V., Disp. ii, sect. iii, 17. — Editio Vives, 1860, vol. 19, p. 20; HEER, *op. cit.*, p. 52; PAPEBROCK, loc. cit. infra; M. J. RYAN, *Eccl. Rev.*, Oct., 1924, vol. 71, p. 418.

(4) 3, 24.

(5) *Cath. Encyclopedia:* Genealogy of Christ.

by Melchi, thus reversing the relations between Levi and Melchi. In doing so, he was but following the example of St. Andrew of Crete. (1)

Finally, the genealogy of Mary attracts our attention. The names of Panther and Barpanther are found nowhere in the Scriptures, nor do the apocrypha which speak at length of Joachim and Anne mention their ancestors. No satisfactory solution of the question has yet been found. (2)

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(1) The latter, in fact, in *Hom. in Nativ. B. V.* III, PG 97, c. 849, at first cites St. Luke's genealogy correctly. In the following paragraph he begins by saying that according to St. Luke, Melchi is the third last, and ends by quoting the names as follows: Joseph who was of Heli, who was of Melchi.

(2) 1. St. Andrew of Crete is the first one, to my knowledge, who proposes the genealogy of Mary in this form. (Loc. cit. supra).

2. EPIPHANIUS, the Monk, in *Serm. de Vita SS. Deiparae*, I and II, PG 120, c. 189, gives the same genealogy with additions — and contradictions. He attributes it to St. Cyril of Alexandria.
EBERLE (*op. cit.*, p. 14) says: "Allein ein solcher Gedankengang kann für die Auffassung des Alexandriners nicht in Anspruch genommen werden." JANSSENS likewise confesses his inability to find any such reference in the works of St. Cyril. (*De Heilige Maagd*, p. 71, note 5).

3. DANIEL VON PAPEBROCK (*Acta Sanctorum:* De S. Joachimo, die xx Martii, Edit. V. Palme, Paris, 1865, vol. ix, p. 78) agrees with a certain Possinus that Panther was probably a surname of of the family so that Levi did not beget Mathat (Melchi for the Damascene) and Panther, but Mathat, surnamed Panther; the latter's son was also surnamed Panther, but to distinguish him from his father, he was called Barpanther (son of Panther).

His alternative explanation (if Panther and Barpanther are really to be distinguished from Mathat and Heli), is based on his view of the genealogies of Matthew and Luke. It is exceedingly involved, and seems improbable.

4. NIESSEN'S remark (*Die Mariologie des Hl. Hieronymus*, Münster in Westfalen, 1913, p. 87) on our author's genealogy seems probable. "Vielleicht hat irgend ein besorgter Schriftsteller der Vorzeit, wie die 'Herrenleute' [Relatives of the Saviour, Cf. EUSEBIUS,

That Anne was of the tribe of Levi seems to be indicated by the following remark in the homily on the feast of the Nativity: "Through you, [Mary,] the kingdom enriched the priesthood. Through you a translation (1) of the law was effected, and the spirit hidden beneath the letter was revealed when the priestly dignity was transferred from the tribe of Levi to that of David." (2)

It is worthy of note that the Damascene nowhere explains the expression, "brothers of the Lord".

B. The Character of Mary's Parents

Whenever the Damascene says anything about the parents of our Blessed Lady, it is always in words of the highest praise. The principle which guided him is clearly indicated in the following words: "O blessed couple, Joachim and Anne, truly undefiled! (3) You are known by the fruit (4) of your womb.....You lived in a manner

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H. E. I, 7.] eigenmächtig die Lukanische Genealogie um den Namen des Vaters und des Grossvaters Helis verkürzten, umgekehrt diesen 'Panther' nebst einem angeblichem Sohne desselben 'Barpanther' eingeschoben um ihn unschädlich zu machen." The fact that: first, some codices of the gospels omitted the names of Mathat and Levi; secondly, that the name of Panther is to be found in several Fathers in connection with the ancestors of Christ; and thirdly, that Heli is frequently identified with Joachim, lends a certain weight to this supposition.

5. Finally Janssens (*Op. cit.*, p. 72, note 2) says: "Deze genealogie schijnt een artificieele uitbreiding te zijn van die welke gegeven werd door Julius Africanus."

(1) Compare Hebr. 7, 11-16, where there is question of a translation of the priesthood.

(2) *I Nativ.* 6 (96, c. 669 A).

(3) παν̓άχραντον

(4) Compare Matth. 7, 16: "By their fruits you shall know them."

pleasing to God and worthy of her who was born of you. Living chastely and holily, you brought forth a treasure of virginity." (1)

In the first homily on the feast of the Assumption, he gives us a glimpse of the deeply interior life which characterized the virtuous couple. "Joachim and Anne were her [Mary's] parents. Joachim, like the shepherd of a flock, controlled his thoughts no less than his creatures, leading them according to his judgment. Conducted by the Lord like a sheep, he lacked none of the best things,"—that is, the virtues which bear the fruit of eternal life in due season. "Joachim was accustomed to nourish his thoughts interiorly, 'in a place of pasture (2)', dwelling in the contemplation of the divine oracles, rejoicing 'on the water of refreshment' of divine grace, guarding them from strange places, and leading them along the beaten path of righteousness." (3)

"Anne, whose [name] signifies grace (4), was joined to him no less by her moral qualities than by marriage. She cultivated all virtues, but for some mysterious reason labored under the burden of the infirmity of sterility. For that grace was truly sterile which could not bear fruit in the souls of men.....Then the good God, looking upon the work of His own hand, was moved to mercy,

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(1) Ibid. 5 (668 B). *Roman Breviary:* Lesson vi of the feast of St. Joachim, Aug. 16.

(2) Ps. 22, 2.

(3) *Hom. I in Dorm.* 5 (96, 708 AB). In this and the following two paragraphs, St. John follows the Proto-gospel of James. (JANSSENS, *op. cit.*, p. 196, note 2).

(4) Cf. De FO iv, 14 (94, 1157 B).

and wishing to save it, solved the sterility of grace, that is, of the devout Anne, who bore a child such as had never been before, nor would be again." (1)

Anne's sterility, therefore, was typical of men's sterility of good works. Two other reasons are adduced to explain it. In the first place, it was fitting that the way for the greatest of miracles be strewn with miracles, that there might be a progress from the more humble to the greater. And then there is a "higher and diviner ground": "nature yields to grace, and stands in suspense, not daring to go further.....For it was fitting that she should be brought forth first-born, who was to bear the first-born of all creation." (2) Similarly, toward the end of this homily: the Word "today brought you forth the first-born from a sterile mother, so that, being the Only-begotten of the Father, and the First-born of all creation, He might be your Only-begotten, Virgin Mother." (3)

The author of the "Gospel of James" evidently took his inspiration from the story of Samuel's parents recounted in the first chapter of the first Book of Kings. Later writers call attention to this dependence; amongst others, our author: "As the Anna of old, being sterile, bore Samuel through prayer and a promise to God, so also this one, through supplication and a promise to God, conceived the Theotokos, so that in this also she might not be inferior to any of the illustrious women." (4)

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(1) *I Dorm.* 5 (96, 708 BC).
(2) Cf. *Roman Breviary:* Feast of St. Joachim, Lesson v. — *I Nativ.* 2 (96, 664 A).
(3) Ibid. 10, (677 B).
(4) FO iv, 14 (94, 1157 B).

The holy lives and ardent prayers of Joachim and Anne merited to be heard, even by a miracle. "Whilst observing the natural law of chastity, you were made worthy of things exceeding nature; for you brought into the world the Mother of God who knew not man." (1)

Miraculous in so far as she had long been sterile, Anne's childbearing was, however, in perfect accord with nature's laws. "Joachim and Anne sowed themselves unto Justice, and gathered a seed of life..... They besought the Lord and a germ of justice came to them..... Joachim and Anne, like spiritual mountains, distilled sweetness." (2) Hence the loins of Joachim and the womb of Anne are blessed. *"O lumbos Joachim beatissimos, ex quibus mundissimum semen jactum est; o praeclaram Annae vulvam, in qua tacitis accrementis ex ea auctus atque formatus fuit fetus sanctissimus!"* (3)

That Mary's birth, accompanied by miracles as it was, should nevertheless result from the cooperation of a father and a mother, had its providential reason: the Son of God "did not bring you forth from a father alone, nor from a mother alone, so that the property of being in every way the Only-begotten (4) might be preserved to the sole Only-begotten. For He alone is the Only-begotten of a father alone, and He alone is from a mother alone." (5)

With reason, therefore, the enraptured orator bids

(1) ἀπείρανδρον; *I Nativ.* 6 (96, 669 A).
(2) Ibid. 9 (673 C).
(3) Ibid. 2 (664 B); see ch. IV, B.
(4) τὸ κατὰ πάντα μονογενές.
(5) Ibid. 10 (677 B).

those blessed parents rejoice. "Blessed are the arms that carried you [Mary], and the lips which enjoyed your chaste kisses,—the parental lips alone, that you might ever cultivate virginity in all things." (1) All creation is under obligation to them for the gift they have offered to their Creator, namely, a worthy mother. (2)

C. Mary's Life

In the gospel of St. John (3) we read: "Now there is at Jerusalem a pond, called Probatica,... having five porches." According to the Jerusalem tradition handed down by St. Sophronius, (4) and followed by our author, the dwelling adjoining this pond was the home of Joachim, the birthplace of Mary. "[Mary] was born in the house of the Probatica belonging to Joachim." (5) "Raise your voice, raise it; do not fear, for the Mother of God is born to us in the holy Probatica, [she] from whom the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world was pleased to be born." (6)

In inspired accents the Damascene recounts the glories of the sacred spot, which had been transformed into a church, (7) and now reechoed the devout preacher's prais-

(1) Ibid. 6 (669 B).
(2) Ibid. 2 (664 A).
(3) Ch. 5, 2.
(4) Sti. Sophronii Hierosol., *Anacreontica* xx, 81 ff.; PG 87, c. 382: "I shall enter into the holy Probatica where the most renowned Anne bore Mary."
(5) FO iv, 14 (94 1157 B).
(6) *I Nativ.* 6 (96, 669 B).
(7) Apropos of this church, Fr. Vassall-Phillips, C.SS.R., (*The Mother of Christ*, p. 3) says: "There is still in existence a grotto

es: "Hail! Probatica, most holy shrine of the Mother of God. Hail! Probatica, ancestral abode of the Queen. Hail! Probatica, once a shelter for Joachim's sheep, now..... a church of the rational fold of Christ. Formerly, you annually received an angel who moved your waters, and restored one [man] to health, freeing him from the disease that afflicted him; but now you have a multitude of heavenly spirits praising the Mother of God together with us; [praising her] who is the abyss of miracles, the source of universal cure; who did not receive a ministering angel, but the Angel of the Great Counsel..... through whom the paralytic [abiding] in you, leaped like a deer. Hail! honorable Probatica, may your grace increase." (1)

Mary's birth was miraculous, as has been noted, only in so far as God's power made the sterile Anne capable of bearing a child. "An angel announced the conception

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that probably formed a part of the house in which our Lady was born. On its site was built in the fourth or fifth century a Byzantine Basilica... Discoveries made as recently as 1914 have proved that the *atrium* of this Basilica, called in the days of St. John Damascene the Church of our Lady's Nativity, stood over the portico leading to the Probatica. The ancient Basilica was several times destroyed and several times restored. The present church, built, like its predecessor, upon the traditional site of our Lady's birth, is dedicated to her holy mother, and is served by the 'White Fathers', a congregation of priests founded by the late Cardinal Lavigerie."

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* adds the following details in the article on St. Joachim: The church of St. Anne was first built in the fourth century, possibly by St. Helena. It was known at various epochs as St. Mary, St. Mary ubi nata est, St. Mary in Probatica, Holy Probatica, and finally, St. Anne. The crypt which formerly contained the tombs of SS. Joachim and Anne was rediscovered in 1889. See the article, "Bethsaida" for additional details concerning the pool and its relation to Joachim's dwelling. See also: VINCENT ET ABEL, *Jérusalem*, t. II.

(1) *I Nativ.* **11** (PG 96, c. 677 C).

of her who was to be born." (1) The contest of the centuries, each of which wished to see her appearance, was settled by the Counsel of God which foreknew her, and loved her, and brought her forth in due time to be the Mother of God and Nurse of His only Son. She was hidden to the fiery darts of evil, and surrounded by angels whilst she was nourished at her Mother's breasts. (2) Only parental kisses were impressed on the lips (3) that were one day to touch the lips of her God, that she might cherish virginity in all things. (4) Thus, this child of predilection was guarded from her earliest days by God's protecting care and her parents' tender solicitude.

At a tender age—our author mentions the fact without giving any details—Mary was presented in the temple. She was a fit candidate, for our author bids St. Anne offer her child to the King of the universe—a child adorned with virtues as with golden fringes. (5) Within the sacred precincts she became the abode of every virtue. (6) Banishing all worldly and carnal thoughts from her mind, she orientated her whole being toward God. She busied herself only with useful thoughts; her eyes were centered upon the divine light; her nostrils were delighted with the odor of the celestial ointments; her feet walked faultlessly in the way of God's commandments. (7) Her life

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(1) *I Dorm.* 6 (PG 96, c. 708 D).
(2) *I Nativ.* 7 (PG 96, c. 672 BCD).
(3) Compare the "*Gospel of James*" VI, 1, *op. cit.* p. 13.
(4) *I Nativ.* 6 (PG 96, c. 669 B).
(5) Ibid. 9 (673 D).
(6) De FO iv, 14 (PG 94, c. 1160 A).
(7) *I Nativ.* 9 (96, 676).

is presented to our admiration and imitation: "Then she was offered to the holy temple of God, and she lived there, giving the example of a better and purer life, removed from all intercourse with frivolous men and women." (1) "How shall I describe your dignified gait? how your dress? how the comeliness of your countenance? your mature mind in your youthful body? Your dress is modest, fleeing all softness and effeminacy; your step is grave, measured, and free from all carelessness; your character reserved, tempered by gaity, and unapproachable to men. (2) Witness the fear which came upon her at the unusual address of an angel. She was docile and obedient to her parents. Her spirit was humble amidst the sublimest contemplations. Her speech was cheerful, proceeding from a calm soul. What else was she than a worthy Temple of God?" (3) As Joachim and Anne were known by their fruit, so the Damascene can imagine Mary only in view of her divine predestination. Everywhere and at all times he sees in her the future Mother of God; whatever he says of her must correspond to this sublime dignity.

A perfect model for children, she became the model of Christian mothers after her union with St. Joseph. Let us consider the circumstances which led to this holy marriage.

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(1) *I Dorm.* 6 (96, 708 D).

(2) Compare St. Sophronius of Jerus.: *II in SS. Deiparae Annun.* xxiii, PG 87, c. 3257 C. Addressing the angel, he says: "Do you not know, O minister of supernatural tidings, that Mary was neither educated with men, nor ever associated with boys."

(3) *I Nativ.* 11 (96, c. 677 D).

Despite her predilection for the house of God and the life of prayer and contemplation she was enabled to lead in its sacred precincts, Mary could not abide there indefinitely. "But when she attained the flower of her age and the law forbade her to stay within the temple, the choir of priests (1) placed her in the hands of Joseph as husband, that is to say, as guardian of her virginity. The latter in comparison with others, had kept the law in its entirety until old age. The holy and irreprehensible maiden lived with him, attended to the household duties, and was unmindful of what took place in front of her house." (2) The reason for this special dispensation of divine providence was, we are told in *De Fide Orthodoxa*, the deception of Satan, who lay in wait for virgins because of the prophecy of Isaias. (3)

Thus, in retirement, in the fulfilment of her humble household duties, Mary prepared herself for God's call, which was not long in coming.

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"When the fullness of time had come, as the inspired apostle says, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to her who was truly a child of God (4) and said to her: 'Hail! full of grace, the Lord is with thee.' What a beautiful address from an angel to her who was above the angels! For he brings universal joy. But she was disturbed by

(1) Compare ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA: *In diem natalem Christi*. PG. 46, c. 1140 B.
(2) *I Dorm.* 6 (96, 709 A).
(3) FO iv, 14 (94, 1160 A).
(4) θεόπαιδα

the word, being unaccustomed to the conversation of men; for she had firmly resolved to preserve her virginity." (1) Reassured by the heavenly messenger, Mary listened to his message. She did not, however, consent immediately. Our author admires the prudence of her manner. "What will the Treasury of true Wisdom answer to this? She does not imitate our first mother, Eve, but rather corrects her unguardedness,..... objecting to the angel's words somewhat as follows: 'How shall this be done, for I know not man?' (2) You are uttering things that are impossible, she says. Your words break the laws of nature which the Creator has sanctioned. I will not allow myself to act the part of a second Eve and disobey the will of my Maker. But if you are not saying contradictory things, explain the manner of the conception, solve my difficulty." (3)

When the angel explained that God would change nature's laws for her, she pronounced her humble "Fiat" "with fear and joy", (4) and the Word was made flesh. In due time, and in accord with the natural order of things, Mary brought forth God's eternal Son for our salvation.

This brief sketch of the Annunciation is found in the first homily on the Dormition. In order to grasp its full meaning, we must have recourse to the long homily of St. Sophronius on the Annunciation, which the Damas-

(1) *I Dorm.* 7 (96, 709 A).
(2) Luke 1, 34.
(3) *I Dorm.* 7 (96, 709 A); Cf. *Carmen in festum Annunciationis* (96, 852 A).
(4) Ibid.

cene very probably had in hand (1) and the substance of which he gave us in the paragraph just cited.

When Gabriel first saluted Mary, she feared, "being unaccustomed to the conversation of men." This fear proceeded from the presence of the angel and from the extraordinary form of his address.

But when the archangel had made known the full purpose of his mission, it was no longer fear for her virtue which was uppermost in the Virgin's mind, for she was ready to do God's bidding, but it was fear lest she should be in the presence of the tempter to whom Eve fell a victim. Hence her question: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" She asked for an explanation of the manner of the virginal conception, and when fully satisfied, gave her consent "with fear and joy." (2)

Let us listen to St. Sophronius himself: his words will make our point clear. Mary is addressing the angel: "Bear in mind the splendor of my virginity, and you will not speak to me of a conception without the cooperation of a man. Bear in mind the excellence of my chastity and you will not speak to me about pregnancy without mar-

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(1) Compare the following passages of the homily on the Annunciation with number 7 of the Damascene's first homily on the Dormition.

The angel announces joy: XVII, 3236D.
The Angel admires Mary's elevation: XXVI, 3249B.
Unaccustomed to the presence of men: XXXIII, 3257C.
The greatness of Mary's grace: XXV, 3245B.
Conception surpassing nature's laws: XXXII, 3257A.
Mary refuses to be a second Eve: XXXIII, 3260A.
God will change His laws: XXXV, 3264B.
Gabriel admires Mary's prudence: XXV, 3245B.

(2) *In SS. Deiparae Annun.* XXXIII, PG 87 (III), 3257C.

riage. Bear in mind my irreprehensible modesty and you will not speak to me about child-bearing contrary to nature's laws." Then, insisting that virginity is far superior to marriage, she continues: "It is for this reason that I fear your message; for this reason I am afraid of your address; for this reason I do not accept your salutation without a mature inquiry, without a prudent examination... lest perchance by believing words which are not worthy of belief, I should deceive myself and follow in the footsteps of my mother Eve."

Enlightened by the answers of the heavenly messenger, Mary explains: (1) "Of a truth, I am not without faith in what God commands, for He does all that He wishes to do. But I am astonished at the tremendous import of the things you are announcing; they are so incredible that I am amazed—so novel and so strange to mortal ears. It is with reason that I am asking how this will come to pass and in what manner it will be fulfilled. Wherefore, when I answered you I did not say, 'This shall not be done because I know not man', but I asked, 'How shall this be done, because I know not man?' This has never happened [before]; a virgin is not known to have borne. Hence I asked to be instructed as to the manner in which I, a virgin, should become a mother without receiving seed..... I am not expressing unbelief, but I am asking for an exact explanation. Tell me in what manner the conception is to take place.....and you will see that I do not doubt your words, but obey them. For it is impossible that what is pleasing to God should not be done."

(1) Ibid. XXXVIII, 3256BC.

St. Andrew of Crete (1) repeats the same thoughts but adds a little consideration worth noting. As a noble daughter of the race of David, Mary knew the Scriptures well, and it is for this reason that her mind immediately turned to the scene of the fall when the angel appeared, and it was only after a prudent examination that she consented. (2)

It is only incidentally, but in enraptured accents that the intimate relations between the Mother and her Child are touched upon. "God sucked the milk of your breasts; your lips were united with the lips of God. O incomprehensible and unspeakable miracles." (3) And later, in the same homily: "Your hands are carrying God; your lap (4) is a throne more sublime than the cherubim." (5) And again, in the first homily on the Dormition: "Being God, He became man,..... and is raised, as an infant, in earthly arms." (6) It was impossible that the devout preacher should not be enchanted by this "miracle surpassing all miracles! A woman is placed above the seraphim, because God is seen become 'a little lower than the angels.' " (7)

Few other details of Mary's life are given until we meet with the account of her death and Assumption. (8) On

(1) *In Annun.*, post medium PG, 97, 901 B.

(2) I am indebted to Dom P. B. LEPLUS, O.S.B. for these considerations on the Annunciation. His article *St. Jean Damascène*, hymnographe, in *La Vie Spirituelle* for March 1925 (T. XI, No. 6, p. 589-597) caused me to enter into the question in greater detail.

(3) *I Nativ.* 7 (96, 672 D).

(4) γόνατα.

(5) Ibid. 9 (676 C).

(6) *I Dorm.* 8 (96, 712 A).

(7) (Hebr. 2, 9). *I Nativ.* 10 (96, 676 D).

(8) See ch. VI.

Calvary she suffered the sword of sorrow which she escaped at childbirth. (1) After our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension, at which she may have assisted, (2) St. John, the evangelist, administered to her needs in the Cenacle whence also her holy soul left her body, to repose in the hands of her Divine Son. (3)

In conclusion, we may say that St. John borrowed freely from the Proto-Gospel of James, but shows no dependence on the other New Testament apocryphals. He is guided throughout his sermons by the thought of the dignity of those of whom he is speaking, accepting what is in harmony with that dignity, and rejecting what he considers incompatible with the simplicity of the Gospel narrative.

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(1) Cf. FO iv, 14 (94, 1161 D).
(2) *In Assumptionem Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*, last stanza (96-845 D).
(3) *II Dorm.* 4 (96, 729 C).

CHAPTER II

THE DIVINE MATERNITY

The central point of St. John Damascene's Mariology as indeed of all Mariology, is the dogma of the Divine Maternity. (1) Referring back to the chapter (2) which he devoted to this question, our author says that he has explained "what is most vital" (3) concerning her: namely, "how she is rightfully and truly the Mother of God." (4) The thought of this sublime dignity was his guiding principle in the life picture which he sketched for us. The subsequent chapters will show us how it is the reason of her spotless virginity, of her admirable holiness from the very womb of her mother, of her glorious Assumption into heaven, of the unlimited power she now wields in our behalf, and of the cult we owe her. The Divine Maternity is, in fact, the very reason for Mary's existence; she was brought into

(1) F. Vercruyssen, in an excellent paper read at the Flemish Marian Congress held at Brussels in 1921, says: "Het 'één en eenig middelpunt' waaruit de heele Mariologie van den H. Joannes uitstraalt als het licht uit de zon, is deze hoofdwaarheid, door het Concilie van Ephese als dogma verklaard, dat Maria in waarheid is de Θεοτόκος..." *De Marialeer van den H. Joannes Damascenus. Handelingen van het Vlaamsch Maria-Congres*, Brussel, 1921, Vol. 1, p. 240.

(2) FO iii, 12.

(3) καιριώτατον: Quæ præcipua magis erant.

(4) FO iv, 14 (94, 1156 A).

the world to cooperate with God in our behalf. (1)

Two chapters of the Damascene's great doctrinal treatise, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, are devoted to the Virgin Mary. In the first (2) of these, he summarizes his teaching on the Divine Maternity; the second (3) treats of Mary's origin and of her perpetual virginity. Closely following the plan of the former chapter, we shall consider in order: first, the meaning of the title: Mother of God; secondly, that Mary is the mother of the Man, Jesus; and thirdly, that Mary's child was truly God. A fourth section will consider the greatness of the dignity of the Mother of God.

A. Meaning of the title, Mother of God

As the doctrine of the Incarnation recurs at every moment in the Damascene's works—in his dogmatic treatises, in his apologetical essays, and in his sermons—the clear statement of the meaning of the title, Mother of God, is frequently repeated. "We rightly and truly proclaim the holy Virgin, Mother of God. For as He is true God who was born of her, so is she the true Theotokos who brought forth the true God Incarnate of her. For we say that God was born of her, not [in the sense] that the divinity of the Word of God took the beginning of its existence from her, but that the Word of God Himself, who was born of the Father from all eternity,..... in these latter days, for our salvation's sake, dwelt in her

(1) *I Nativ.* 9 (96, 676 A).
(2) iii, 12.
(3) iv, 14.

womb, was made flesh without change, and born of her. For the holy Virgin did not bring forth a mere man, but the true God; not God simply, but God Incarnate; not a body which came down from heaven and passed through her as through a canal, but [the Word] who took flesh of her of the same nature as ours, and subsisting in Himself." (1) Mary is not, however, to be called a goddess after the example of Greek mythology. (2)

In the *De Recta Sententia Liber*, having explained the hypostatic union, he concludes as follows: "Wherefore, I confess and rightly and truly proclaim in mind, in heart, and in word, that the holy Virgin Mary is the Mother of God, because she bore the Eternal and Only-begotten Son of God, [who is] God by nature, made flesh of her." (3) A clearer formulation of our Catholic doctrine could not be desired.

Another aspect, however, might be noted before passing on. It is the statement of the true faith against the Nestorians. Mary was never for an instant the mother of a mere man. The word took "of the holy Virgin flesh animated by a rational and intellectual soul subsisting in Himself, and having united Himself to it hypostatically, and having been conceived a God Incarnate, one Son, and Christ and Lord, He made His Mother the Mother of God." (4)

Mary was not unaware of the dignity of the Child she

(1) FO iii, 12 (94, 1028 BC); FO iv, 14 (94, 1161 A); *Contra Jacobitas* 84 (94, 1484); 2 *Adv. Nest.* 30, *Theol. Quartalschr.*, 1901, p. 574.

(2) *II Dorm.* 15 (96, 744 B).

(3) No. 2 (94, 1425 D).

(1) *Hom. in Sab. Sanct.* 12 (96, 631 A); *I Adv. Nest.* 1 and 43 (95, 188 A and 224 B).

bore. Speaking of Mary's sorrows, the Damascene says that her heart was pierced with a sword of sorrow when she saw "Him whom she knew to be God when she bore Him", put to death as a sinner. (1)

In order to establish Mary's right to the title of Theotokos, it must be shown that the Son she bore was truly man, and at the same time, truly God. Heir to the doctrine which the Christological heresies of the preceding centuries had brought into clear light, St. John Damascene never grows tired of restating his faith in the mystery of the God-Man, and of explaining to his adversaries the manner in which the Incarnation was accomplished. In the first place, therefore, he proves the reality of Jesus' body against the host of early heretics who denied it, as well as against the Eutychians of a more recent date.

B. Mary, Mother of the Man-Christ

The Damascene considers two questions relative to the origin of Christ's sacred humanity; in the first place, he rejects the errors which question its reality; and secondly, he explains the manner of its conception and birth.

The enemies of the reality of the humanity of Christ are threefold: against those who teach that Jesus had a heavenly, ethereal, or imaginary body, our author proves that Christ's body was in every way the same as ours; against the Apollinarists, he insists that the Man-Christ had a rational soul; and finally, against the Mono-

(1) FO iv, 14 (94, 1161 D).

physites and Jacobites, he maintains that Christ's human nature was not destroyed by the hypostatic union.

In the very definition of the Divine Maternity cited above, the Damascene rejects the doctrine of the Valentinians (1): "The holy Virgin did not bring forth..... a body which came down from heaven, and passed through (2) her as through a canal, but [the Word] who of her took flesh of the same nature as ours, subsisting in Himself. For if the body had been sent down from above and not taken from our nature, of what value is the Incarnation ?" (3) "The Word, therefore, was made flesh, neither by changing His nature, nor by the mere appearance of an Incarnation," (4) but by taking of the holy Virgin flesh animated by a rational soul. (5)

When St. Paul says that the Second Adam is "from heaven", we must not misunderstand his meaning. "But if [St. Paul] says: 'The first Adam was of the earth, earthly: the second Adam, the Lord from heaven', (6) he does not mean that His body is from heaven, but [points out] clearly that He is not a mere man. Note that he called Him both Adam and Lord, indicating the two [natures] at once. Adam, indeed, means born of the earth; it is evident that the human nature which was formed from the earth, is earthly; the word 'Lord', on the con-

(1) *De Haeres.* 31 (94, 697).
(2) διά.
(3) FO iii, 12 (94, 1028 C).
(4) οὐδὲ φαντάσας τὴν οἰκονομίάν
(5) *I Adv. Nest.* 2 (95, 189 B); cf. FO iii, 2 (94, 988 A); *Libellus Orthodoxiae* 7, Damascenica, p. [48].
(6) Cf. I Cor. xv, 47. The Damascene substitutes "Adam" for "man".

trary, proclaims the divine nature..... And the apostle says again: 'God sent His (Only-begotten) Son, made of (1) a woman'. (2) He does not say through (3) a woman, but of (4) a woman." (5)

In the second treatise in defense of sacred images, the Damascene states his faith in the reality of the Lord's body in the following words: "I do not adore matter, but I adore the Creator of matter, who became matter for my sake, who took up His abode in matter, and wrought my salvation through matter." (6) And to prove that chalices, crucifixes, and similar objects, although material, are deserving of a religious cult, he asks: "And before all these, is not the Body and Blood of my Lord, matter?" (7) This eucharistic body is the body taken of the holy Virgin. (8)

It may be remarked here that St. John included the Eutychians amongst those who denied the reality of Jesus' body. He says that they "deny that our Lord Jesus Christ took flesh of the holy Virgin, but affirm that He became Incarnate in some more divine manner." (9) Lequien remarks in a note that the implication is not just. A refutation of the Monophysite heresy, rightly understood, will be given in the following section.

(1) ἐκ.
(2) Gal. iv. 4.
(3) διά.
(4) ἐκ.
(5) FO iii, 12 (94, 1029 A). For a discussion of these distinctions, see E. NEUBERT, *op. cit.*, ch. i, p. 14 ff.
(6) *De Imag.* II, 14 (94, 1300 B).
(7) Ibid. C.
(8) FO iv, 13 (94, 1141 A).
(9) *De Haeres.* 82 (94, 740 A).

The body, therefore, which Mary brought forth was flesh of her flesh, blood of her blood; it was formed by divine operation. Apollinaris granted that Christ assumed a body like ours, and a sensitive soul, but he taught that the Word had taken the place of the rational soul. (1) The Damascene objects that such a being would not be a man. Not only did the Son of God assume a complete human nature, soul as well as body, but it was through the medium of the soul that the body was assumed. "No one gainsays that man is an intellectual and rational animal; how then did [the Word] become a man if He assumed a soulless body, or a mindless soul? (2) Such a being is not a man..... (3) Mind is, therefore, joined to mind, (4) and the mind becomes the medium between God's purity and the grossness of the flesh; for if the Lord assumed a mindless soul, He assumed the soul of an irrational animal." (5) Note the strength of the last expression.

In fact, "the Word of God left aside nothing that He implanted in our nature when He first made it, but He assumed all: a body, a rational and intellectual soul (6) and their properties." (7) In the homily on Holy Satur-

(1) νοῦς
(2) ψυχὴν ἄνουν.
(3) FO iii, 18 (94, 1072 C).
(4) νοῦς οὖν νοΐ.
(5) Ibid. (1073 A); cf. FO iii, 6 (1005 B).
(6) ψυχὴν νοερὰν καὶ λογικήν.
(7) FO iii, 6 (1005 A); cf. *Libellus Orthodoxiae* 7 and 8, *Damascenica*, p. [48]. See Conc. Constantinop. II, Can. 4: *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, DENZINGER-BANNWART, No. 216. (10th Ed. — Friburgi, Brisgoviæ, 1908); cf. S. SOPHRONII, *Epistola Synodica*, PG 87 (III) c. 3161.

day, the same thought is repeated at greater length: "As man, He became one with our nature and race, having in Himself the complete nature of the first Adam,—all that of which a man consists and all that he is: a mortal body and a soul which is intellectual, immortal, and endowed with the faculty of reasoning, of self-determination, of will and of operation; for the living being which lacks any of these is not a man." (1) Christ's body answered in every way to the definition of man. (2)

The irreprehensible passions were not wanting to our Lord's humanity. (3) Several times our author names individually the passions assumed, citing Scripture texts in proof of his assertions. (4) So also, in his treatise on the *Two Wills*, he names all the members of our Lord's sacred body, proving the existence of each by some allusion to it contained in the Gospels. (5) "He became a perfect man without sin, for sin is not a constituent element of human nature." (6)

The reason why the body formed of Mary's most pure blood must necessarily have been perfect in every respect, is to be found in the mystery of the Redemption. What has not been assumed, St. John repeats with the earliest Fathers, (7) has not been healed. "He assumed

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(1) *Hom. in Sab. Sanct.* 12 (96, 612 C).
(2) FO i, 2 (94, 793 A).
(3) Ibid. 11, (844 B).
(4) Ibid. iii, 20 (1081 B).
(5) *De Duab. Volunt.* 36 (95, 173 B).
(6) *Exp. Fidei* VIII (95, 426 C).
(7) For a series of these testimonies, see: TERRIEN: *La Mère de Dieu, et la Mère des Hommes*. Paris, 1900. Vol. 1, pp. 68-80; NEUBERT, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-22.

me entirely, and was wholly united to my whole nature in order to bring salvation to the whole. For what was not assumed was not cured." (1) The definition of the Divine Maternity in our guiding chapter in *De Fide Orthodoxa* concludes as follows: "if the body was sent down from heaven, and was not taken from our own nature, of what advantage is the Incarnation ? For the Incarnation of the Word of God took place that the nature which sinned and fell and was corrupted, might itself conquer the tyrant who deceived it, and thus might be freed from corruption, as the divine apostle says: 'For by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead.' (2) If the first is true, so also is the second." (3)

God could have delivered man from Satan's servitude by His almighty power, but in order not to give our enemy any reason for complaint, He, in His love for man, became Mary's Child that our conquered nature might overthrow its tyrant. (4)

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But how was the great mystery of the Incarnation brought about ? If Mary is the Ever-Virgin, is she the Mother of Jesus in the full sense of the word ? Undoubtedly she is. We honor two births of our Lord Jesus Christ: the one from the Father from all eternity, "the other, in these latter days for our sake, like unto ours, and above

(1) FO iii, 6 (1005 AB).
(2) I Cor. xv, 21.
(3) FO iii, 12 (94, 1028 C).
(4) Ibid. 1 and 18 (984 A and 1072 B).

us: for our sake, because it was for our salvation; like ours, because He became man of a woman, and in the ordinary time; above us, because not by seed, but of the Holy Spirit and of the holy Virgin Mary [in a manner] surpassing the law of conception." (1) If Jesus' birth was like ours in so far as He was born of a woman, then Mary is truly His mother.

The mother's part in generation is the preparation of the material, and—after the latter's fecundation by what is styled, in Scholastic terminology, the "active principle"—the nutrition of the vivified germ until birth. Now all this was done by Mary. (2) The Damascene clearly teaches this in the following passage: "When the plenitude of time was come, the angel of the Lord was sent to her [Mary] to announce the conception of the Lord. Thus, she conceived the Son of God, the subsisting Power of God, 'not by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man,' (3) that is, *non ex congressu et semine*, but by the Father's good pleasure and the cooperation of the Holy Spirit. She supplied to the Creator, (4) from her pure and immaculate flesh and blood, the matter to be organized, and to the (divine) Artist the matter to be formed, and to the Son of God and God, the matter from which to be made flesh and to become man, [thus] fulfilling the office of our first mother. For as the latter was formed

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(1) FO iii, 7 (94, 1009 C); 2 *Adv. Nest.* 49, *Theol. Quartalschr.* 83 (1901), p. 580. Cf. *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 35, art. 3, ad. 2.

(2) See F. MORGOTT, *Die Mariologie des Hl. Thomas von Aquin*, Freiburg im Br., 1878, pp. 14-17.

(3) John I, 13.

(4) Cf. FO iii, 12 (1032 C).

from Adam *citra coitum*, so also Mary bore the New Adam, bringing Him forth in accordance with the law of pregnancy, and [at the same time], above the natural manner of generation. For He who was born of the Father without a mother, is born of a woman without a father; in so far as He is born of a woman, [His birth] is in accordance with the ordinary manner of pregnancy, but because of the absence of a father, it is above the natural course of generation. In so far as He was born in the ordinary time (having completed nine months and begun the tenth), (1) [His birth] is in accord with the law of gestation, but because painless, above the law of parturition. For her for whom pleasure did not precede, pain did not follow, according to the word of the prophet: 'Before she was in travail, she bore.' And again: 'Before the time of parturition came, she (fled and) brought forth a male child.'" (2) As soon as the holy Virgin had given her consent the mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished.

In the chapter of *De Fide Orthodoxa* from which the above citation was taken, our author tells us that "the conception was effected through the hearing." (3) Similarly, in the homily on the Nativity, he speaks of Mary's ears,... "through which the Word entered in order to take flesh"; and in the first homily on the Dormition, he proclaims Mary truly blessed for having "submitted her

(1) Cf. *Libellus Orthodoxiae* 10, *Damascenica*, p. [48]. St. John seems to take each month as having 30 days. (SUAREZ: *Opera Omnia*. Paris, Vives. 1860. Vol. 19, p. 220).

(2) Is. lxvi, 7; FO iv, 14 (94, 1160 BC).

(3) Ibid. (1161 A). δι' ἀκοῆς μὲν ἡ σύλληψις

hearing to the Word of God", and conceived through the archangel's words. Strange as this way of considering the virginal conception may seem to us, it was quite commonly received among Greek Fathers. St. Sophronius, for example, says that the Divine Word "entered her [Mary's] sacred womb and was made flesh through the voice of the angel" (1)

Corresponding to the extraordinary manner of the conception was the painless birth of the divine Infant. Eve listened to the serpent and in consequence, was condemned to bring forth children in sorrow, but Mary "inclined her ear to the Word of God... and having conceived *sine voluptate ac viri congressu...* she bore, as was fitting, without pain." (2) Although painless, Christ's birth was not *per Dei Genitricis latus, sed per eam partem per quam exire foetus consuescit.* (3)

The Damascene summarizes Mary's part in the Incarnation in the following inflamed words in the homily on the Nativity: "From you alone the Creator took His portion, the first fruits of our nature. (4) His flesh is made of yours, His blood of yours; God sucked the milk of your breasts, and your lips were united with the lips of God." (5)

The deviation from the ordinary manner of generation is due to the operation of the active principle. No man has a part in Mary's fecundity. The words, *"absque se-*

(1) *I Nativ.* 9 (96, 676 B). διὰ τῆς τοῦ ἀγγέλου φωνῆς.
(2) *II Dorm.* 3 (96, 728 B).
(3) FO iv, 14 (94, 1161 A).
(4) φυράματος.
(5) No. 7 (96, 672 CD).

mine", (1) *"non ex congressu viri"*, (2) are often repeated. Equally frequent are such expressions as: "made flesh of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary" (3), "conceived of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary" (4), "incarnate by the good pleasure of the Father and the cooperation of the Holy Ghost" (5). The manner of the conception, with a special emphasis on the active principle, is thus set forth in the beginning of the treatise on the Incarnation in *De Fide Orthodoxa:* "Therefore, after the consent of the holy Virgin, the Holy Ghost came upon her according to the word of God which the angel had spoken, cleansed her, and gave her the power to receive the divinity of the Word, together with the generative power. (6) Then the subsisting Wisdom and Power of the Most High God, the Son of God, consubstantial with the Father, overshadowed her as if He were a divine seed, and formed for Himself of her holy and most pure blood, flesh animated by a rational and intellectual soul—the first fruits of our nature. [He did not accomplish] this *seminali procreatione,* but after the manner of the Creator, (7) through

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(1) ἀσπόρως. *De Rect. Sent. Liber* 2 (94, 1424 C); FO iv, 13 (94, 1140 C); Ibid. iii, 7 (1008 D); ibid. i, 2 (792 D); *I Adv. Nest.* 43 (95, 221 C).

(2) ἀνεὺ συναφείας; FO iii, 1 (984 C); ibid. iv, 14 (1160 B); *I Adv. Nest.* 43 (95, 221 C).

(3) See *De Sancta Trinitate* 4 (95, 13 B); *De Rect. Sent. Liber* 2 (94, 1424 C); *Libellus Orthodoxiae* 11, *Damascenica,* p. [49].

(4) FO iii, 1 (94, 984 C); *I Nativ.* 3 (96, 665 B); 2 *Adv. Nest.* 2, *Theol. Quartal.* 1901, p. 561. See the various symbols (Apostles Creed, Nicene, etc.).

(5) *II Dorm.* 3 (96, 728 B); FO i, 2 (792 D); ibid. iv, 14 (1160 B).

(6) δύναμιν δεκτικὴν... καὶ γεννητικήν.

(7) οὐ σπερματικῶς, ἀλλὰ δημιουργικῶς.

the Holy Spirit. [The bodily] form was not organized by gradual additions, but was perfect from the first instant, the Word of God Himself supplying its hypostasis." (1)

Similarly, in the homily on the Nativity, (2) the Damascene describes the active agent in the Incarnation, introducing the person of the Father; this passage will be cited below. And finally, in the second homily on the Assumption, playing on the double signification of the word λόγος (3) as he does elsewhere in his homilies, he says: "But she, the truly blessed above all, [in contrast to Eve], inclined her ear to the *Word* of God, and was filled by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and through the Father's good pleasure, announced by the archangel, became pregnant." (4)

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Two points in the preceding citations call for special attention: the first one is the preliminary purification and strengthening of the holy Virgin in view of the miraculous conception; the second, the operation of each of the three Divine Persons in the accomplishment of the Incarnation.

The full discussion of the antecedent purification of

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(1) FO iii, 2 (94, 985 B); *I Adv. Nest.* 43 (95, 221 D and 224 A).
(2) *I Nativ.* 3 (96, 665 BC); See p. 31.
(3) *In SS. Deiparæ Annun.* XLVI, PG 87 (III), 3277 B. Cf. *II Dorm.* 1 (96, 724 B): τί γὰρ τῇ μητρὶ τοῦ Λόγου ἢ λόγον προσοίσομεν; τῷ ὁμοίῳ γὰρ χαίρει τὸ ὅμοιον.
(4) 2 *Dorm.* 3 (96, 728 B).

Mary, which implies an increase of sanctity rather than the cleansing from a positive stain, will be reserved to the chapter dealing with the Immaculate Conception; its relation to the conception, however, will be considered at once. The immediate preparation of the holy Virgin is thus described in the first of the above cited passages: the Holy Ghost "cleansed her, and gave her the power to receive the divinity of the Word, together with the generative power." St. Thomas comments on these words several times. In one place he tells us that there is no question here of a real purification, but rather that the Holy Spirit harmonized all the powers of Mary's soul more fully, and elevated her above the multitude. (1) Elsewhere, (2) the Angelic Doctor explains each of the above words separately. The Holy Ghost "purified" her, that is, prevented a conception in original sin; Christ was, therefore, the object of this purification. "Power" was given her to "receive", that is, conceive the Word of God; "together with the generative power," that is, the power to bear whilst remaining a virgin. This interpretation seems to agree very well with the Damascene's way of thinking. He marvels at the thought of a mere creature enclosing the incomprehensible God in her womb: "He who fills heaven and earth, (3) whose throne is heaven, and the earth His footstool, (4) made the womb of his own servant [His] most ample dwelling." (5) About to

(1) *Summa Theologica* III, q. 27, a. 3, ad 3.
(2) *Summa Theol.* III, q. 32, a. 4, ad 1.
(3) Jerem. 23, 24.
(4) Is. 66, 1.
(5) 1 *Dorm.* 8 (96, 712 A); cf. ibid. 1 (700 B).

bear the glowing Coal of Divinity, (1) a special infusion of grace was necessary to preserve the Virgin Mother. "The All-Holy Spirit, by the dew of His divinity, kept you unharmed by the Divine Fire. For this is what the bush of Moses foreshadowed." (2) The purification and strengthening in question, was, therefore, an immediate preparation of our blessed Lady for the accomplishment of the Incarnation. (3) Suarez, commenting the above passage, says that the Holy Ghost elevated and strengthened the Virgin's natural power of gestation that it might act more quickly and more efficaciously. (4)

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Let us now pass on to the second question. In order to arrive at a clear understanding of the Damascene's conception of the divine activity in causing the conception in the womb of the holy Virgin, it will be necessary briefly to consider his views on the divine operations.

The Father is the first principle of all things; (5) the Word, the primordial power which makes all things; (6)

(1) Ibid. C; 3 *Dorm.* 2 (756 A).

(2) *I Nativ.* 10, (96, 677 B).

(3) *Summa Theol.* III, q. 32, a. 1, ad. 1. "Spiritus Sanctus superveniet in te, quasi ad præparandam et formandam materiam corporis Christi." But the Damascene refers the formation of the Sacred Humanity to the Son of God Himself.

(4) SUAREZ: *Opera Omnia.* Ed. Vivès. Paris, 1860, T. 19, p. 172. De Beata Virgine: Disp. x, Sect. 2. "Loquitur de vi generandi, quam non negamus in Virgine fuisse, atque per vim Spiritus Sancti elevatam esse et confortatam, ut efficacius ac velocius operaretur quam naturaliter posset."

(5) δύναμις προκαταρκτική.

(6) J. BILZ, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

the Holy Ghost brings all things to their perfection, principally by the work of sanctification. (1)

Using a simple illustration, our author explains how the Father does all things through His subsisting Power, the Word: "As we say that fire illumines by the light which proceeds from it, and do not call light a subservient instrument of the fire, but rather a physical force, so we say that the Father does all that He does through His only-begotten Son, not as a ministering instrument, but as by a physical and subsisting power." (2)

Similarly, the second person acts through the Holy Spirit. Speaking of the creative power of the Word, our author says: "All that God did, He did by the operation of the Holy Spirit." (3) The Holy Ghost is the companion

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(1) τελεσιουργικὸν τῆς τῶν ἁπάντων ποιήσεως. FO i, 12 and 13 (94, 849 A and 856 C); *De S. Trinitate* 2 (95, 12 B.) See Bilz, *op. cit.*, p. 133 ff. Der Sohn als Weisheit, Macht und Wille des Vaters.

(2) FO i, 8 (94, 820 B).

(3) FO iv, 13 (1141 A). This whole passage is worthy of being reproduced here: "If the Word of God Himself became man because He willed it, and without seed made the pure and immaculate blood of the holy Ever-Virgin flesh for Himself, is He not able to make bread His body, and wine His blood? He said in the beginning: 'Let the earth bring forth the green herb,' (Gen. 1, 11) and until now, aided by the rain, impelled and strengthened by the divine precept, it brings forth products of the same kind. God said, 'This is my body', and, 'This is my blood', (1 Cor. 11, 24)... and by His omnipotent command it is done... A shower comes upon this new field through the invocation, the overshadowing power of the Spirit. For as all that God [the Word, as may be seen from what precedes] did, He did by the operation of the Holy Spirit, so now also, the operation of the Spirit performs what supersedes nature, what can be comprehended by faith alone. 'How shall this be done,' said the Holy Virgin, 'for I know not man.' (Luc. 1, 34 ff.) The archangel Gabriel replied: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee'. And now you ask how the bread becomes the body of Christ, and the wine and

of the Word, whose power He manifests. (1) In fact, the third person is frequently referred to as the finger by which the Word performs His actions. (2)

In a word, the Incarnation is effected by God subsisting in one nature. It is accomplished by the good pleasure of the Father, and by the power of the Word operating through the Holy Ghost. It would seem that our author ascribed to each of the divine persons a distinct role in this great mystery.

The Damascene's insistence on the "good pleasure" of the Father has a deeper signification than appears at first sight. It is the phrase, "spouse whom the Father espoused", (3) as well as similar expressions in the homily on the Nativity, which call our attention to our author's conception of the relations existing between Mary and the first person of the Holy Trinity in the mystery of the Incarnation. Together with the heavenly Father, the holy Virgin generates the Word of God according to the flesh.

In the homily on Mary's Nativity, explaining the triple

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the water the blood of Christ. I also say to you: the Holy Ghost comes and operates these things which surpass comprehension and expression." FO iv, 13 (94, 1140 C ff.). In short, the Damascene says that the transubstantiation is accomplished "through the Holy Ghost, as also through the Holy Ghost, the Lord made for Himself flesh [taken] from the holy Theotokos, and subsisting in Himself." (ibid. 1145 A).

(1) FO i, 7 (94, 805 B).

(2) *I Nativ.* 3 (96, 665 A); ibid. 6 (669 D); ibid. 7 (671 A); 3 *Dorm.* 2 (756 D).

(3) νύμφην... ἐνυμφεύσατο; 2 *Dorm.* 14 (96, 742 B). For a discussion of the title of "Spouse of the Father", see ICARD: *Doctrine de M. Olier expliquée par ses Écrits.* 2e Éd. Paris, 1891. pp. 310-324. TERRIEN also touches upon the question, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 189.

"Sanctus" of the Trisagion hymn now sung during the adoration of the cross on Good Friday, our author says: "Holy is God (1) the Father, who in you [Mary] and of you was pleased to accomplish the mystery which He predetermined before the centuries. Holy is the Mighty One, the Son of God and only-begotten God, who to-day [caused you to be brought forth] the first-born from a sterile mother, so that, being the Only-begotten of the Father, and the First-born of all creation, He might be your Only-begotten, Virgin Mother, the first-born among many brethren like unto us, having taken flesh and blood of you..... Holy is the Immortal One, the All-Holy Spirit," who preserved the Virgin Mother lest she be consumed by the Divine Flame which she bore. (2) God the Father made His Only-begotten the Son of the Virgin Mary.

The temporal mission of the Son is so intimately connected with His eternal generation that it is to be attributed to the Father alone. But this mission was accomplished by the Word's assuming flesh in Mary's virginal womb; (3) hence, the Incarnation may be considered as

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(1) Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός.

(2) *I Nativ.* 10 (96, 677 AB). See *Études* 136 (1913, 3), p. 580: *La prière de la Sainte Vierge.* Here we find the following citation from the Anaphora [preface and canon] of the Blessed Virgin as found in the Ethiopian missal: "Saint est le Père qui se complaît en toi, Saint est le Fils unique qui habite en ton sein, saint est le Paraclet, esprit de justice, qui te soutient."

(3) See *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 43, a. 1: "Missio igitur divinæ personæ convenire potest, secundum quod importat ex una parte processionem originis a mittente; et secundum quod importat ex alia parte novum modum existendi in alio. Sicut Filius dicitur esse missus a Patre in mundum, secundum quod incepit in mundo esse per carnem assumptam."

an extension *ad extra* of the eternal generation of the Word.

That this is the Damascene's viewpoint may be gathered from the following passage of the homily on our Lady's Nativity just cited: "The head of every woman is man. (1) But of her who knew not man, God the Father acted as head, and having made the alliance (2) by the Holy Ghost, (3) He sent His own Son, and Word, the omnipotent Power of God, as if He were a divine and spiritual seed. Through the good pleasure of the Father, *non ex naturali congressu*, but of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary, above the laws of nature, the unchangeable Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. For the union of God with men is accomplished through the Holy Spirit. 'He that can, let him take it.' (4) 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' (4) Let us put aside corporal things. The divinity is without passion, O men; He who first bore in His own nature (5) without passion, also bore His own Son a second time without passion in the Incarnation. (6) David, the Lord's forefather, (7) is a witness to this when he says: 'The Lord hath said to me: thou art my son, to-day have I begotten thee.' (8) This 'to-day'

(1) Cf. Eph. v, 23.
(2) συναλλαγάς.
(3) Κεφαλὴ αὐτῆς ὁ θεὸς καὶ Πατὴρ ἐχρημάτισεν, Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ συναλλαγὰς ποιησάμενος, qui Spiritus Sancti opera conjugii veluti fœdus paciscens. The Latin version expresses the Damascene's thought very well.
(4) Matth. 19, 12; Luke 8, 8.
(5) φυσικῶς.
(6) οἰκονομικῶς.
(7) θεοπάτωρ.
(8) Ps. 2, 7.

has no place in the eternal generation, for that [generation] did not take place in time." (1)

If it is permissible to use a fragment which is attributed to St. John Damascene, and which bears all the marks of authenticity, then the following words may be cited as a more direct statement of a part of the above passage: "The Father sent His own Son like a divine, spiritual seed, and the Word, without change, became flesh of you. [The Father], having a first time borne the Son according to His nature without passion, will again bear Him without passion in the Incarnation." (2)

It is, indeed, the Father, who "sends" His Son into the virginal womb, like a divine seed: hence the need of the divine espousals which the Holy Ghost was to negotiate. The Damascene bids Joachim and Anne to offer their child, adorned with the ornaments of the Spirit, to the King of the universe. (3) The same Holy Spirit prepared her for the future sublime alliance, for Mary "dwelt in the bridal chamber of the Spirit, and was preserved immaculate to be the Spouse (4) of God, and the Mother of Him who is God by nature." (5) In due time "she is espoused to God Himself, (6) and brings forth God's mercy," to raise to the dignity of people of God the nation which had proved unfaithful. (7)

(1) *I Nativ.* 3 (96, 665 BC).
(2) Fragment of a sermon on the Nativity or Annunciation. (PG 96, 816). The entire fragment closely resembles the above cited homily on the Nativity.
(3) *I Nativ.* 9 (96, 673 D).
(4) νύμφην.
(5) Ibid. 7 (672 B).
(6) αὐτῷ τῷ θεῷ μνηστεύεται.
(7) Ibid. 8 (673 B).

With God as "Spouse" and "head", there was no need of a human agent in the conception of the Word: *"O filia semper virgo, cui nulla ad concipiendum necessaria viri opera est! Quem enim utero gestasti, hic sempiternum Patrem habet."* (1) The son of God was conceived "'not by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man,' that is, *non ex congressu et semine*, but by the Father's good pleasure and the cooperation of the Holy Spirit." (2) He entered "her virginal (3) womb through the Holy Ghost." (4).

Here also is the basic reason for the virginal conception and birth: He who is to be born is "Light of Light." Having called the noble offspring of the chaste couple, Joachim and Anne, "Treasure of virginity", the Damascene concludes: "It was fitting that virginity born of chastity [i.e., Mary] should have brought forth corporeally the sole only-begotten Light, by the good pleasure of Him who bore incorporeally; that she should have borne Him who does not generate, but who is always generated — whose only personal property is that of being generated." (5) We may conclude with Scheeben: "Considered from this point of view, the Virgin's conceiving is a reception or an accepting of the Son of God by the acceptance of the generative power of His eternal Father." (6)

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(1) *I Nativ.* 7 (672 C).
(2) John, 1, 13; FO iv, 14 (94, 1160 B).
(3) ἀπειρόγαμον.
(4) *Libellus Orthodoxiae* 7, *Damascenica*, p. [48].
(5) *I Nativ.* 5 (96, 668 C); cf. 1 *Dorm.* 8 (712 C).
(6) See SCHEEBEN: *La Dogmatique*, Paris, 1882. Vol. IV, p. 840, § 230.

Passing on to the role of the Son in the Incarnation, we see that the Damascene's exegesis of the gospel of the Annunciation, whilst in accord with many of the Greek Fathers, (1) differs from the now universally accepted interpretation. St. Thomas, (2) whilst admitting that the conception of Christ's body in so far as it is a work *ad extra*, is the work of the three divine Persons, attributes it to the Holy Ghost because it was, in the highest degree, a work of love. This appropriation is not known to the Damascene. (3)

It is the Son of God, the subsisting "Power of the Most High", who overshadows the holy Virgin and forms a body for Himself. The coming of the Word preceded—if it is permissible to distinguish an antecedence in the conception—the formation of the body. "The angel did not say that the conception [should take place] first, and then the indwelling of God; but that the conception [should be accomplished] through the coming and the operation of the Holy Spirit, and by the indwelling of the Word of God, so that the overshadowing of the Power of the Most High should take place first, that is, the conception of the Word, and then (4) the existence of the flesh subsisting in the Word." (5)

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(1) See Lequien's note on this place. He mentions St. Athanasius, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and several Latin Fathers. See also St. Sophronius, *Orat.* II, *in SS. Deip. Annun.* 43 (87, III, 3273 D).

(2) *Summa Theologica* III, q. 32, a. 1. — St. Thomas knows our author's view and approves of it.

(3) See Bilz, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

(4) τότε.

(5) *I Adv. Nest.* 1 (95, 189 A). Scheeben, *op. cit.*, p. 830: "Dans la conception surnaturelle de Jésus-Christ, au contraire, la mère

The overshadowing by the Word is here synonymous with the conception. The Word is, as it were, "a divine seed"; (1) He forms a body for Himself and at the same time gives it existence in His own person. In the *Expositio Fidei*, the Damascene says that the human nature was "both conceived and formed by the Word—the formation (*coagulatio*) having been wrought by a divine seed." (2) Similarly, in the second homily on the Dormition, he tells us that the Creator of the world "was made Child in her by Himself, [i.e., by His own action], without seed." (3)

In order to understand the Damascene's doctrine on

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reçoit le germe spirituel de son fruit, ce germe qui existe déjà comme personne, et même comme personne divine. A ce titre, la personne forme dans la mère par sa propre vertu spirituelle, son propre corps et le vivifie."

Page 835: "Cela seul suffit déjà pour qu'on puisse et doive dire avec les Pères que la conception du Verbe est antérieure, *ratione et natura*, et sert de base à l'origine du Christ en tant qu'homme dans le sein de la Vierge, et par conséquent à la conception du Christ en tant qu'homme, si l'on entend par conception la réception du Verbe se formant lui-même sa chair, et se créant à lui-même une âme spirituelle pour le vivifier. En ce qui regarde la conception du Verbe du côté de la Mère, le premier est le plus prochain élément, c'est encore la réception du Verbe, car c'est le Verbe même qui forme son propre corps dans le sein de Marie et infuse dans un corps qui appartient déjà au Verbe l'âme qui doit l'animer." This is an exact description of the Damascene's view.

(1) FO iii, 2 (94, 985 B); *I Adv. Nest.* 43 (95, 221 C); 2 *Adv. Nest.* 23, *Theol. Quartalschr.*, p. 569; Fragment (96, 816); etc.

(2) *Exp. Fidei* VIII, (95, 427A). St. Thomas also concedes that, according to our author, the active principle of the conception is the second person of the Holy Trinity. "Secundum quod in semine intelligitur virtus activa, sic Chrysostomus et Damascenus comparant semini Spiritum Sanctum, *vel etiam Filium*, qui est virtus altissimi." *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 32, a. 2, ad. 2. The words: "vel etiam Filium", refer to the Damascene's opinion in FO iii, 2.

(3) ἐν ταύτῃ πρὸς ἑαυτοῦ ἀσπόρως βρέφος δεδημιούργηται; 2 *Dorm.* 2 (96, 725C).

the action of the Word in the Incarnation (as well as his teaching on the Mary's initial sanctity which will be treated in a subsequent chapter), (1) an exposition of his views on generation will prove useful. A comparison may help to grasp his thought.

The generative process may be compared to the development of a plant from a seed. A grain of wheat is planted in the earth. The part of the "active principle" is that of the sower. He alone provides the seed. The earth—the mother—receives it. She does not form it, but furnishes it with water and the nutritive elements dissolved therein, thus causing it to grow and take on the form of a plant. The whole hypostasis of the future plant—its individuality—is that of the seed; but this hypostasis will sustain also all the food that, coming from the earth, contributed towards the formation and the growth of the plant.

To come back to the Damascene: in his eyes, conception is the reception of the seed of a man, which seed becomes the hypostasis also to the blood of the mother which will nourish it. Thus, in the first, treatise against the Nestorians, he says: "For in every woman, conception takes place as a result of the seed received from a man; conception is [to be ascribed to] the seed of a man, and the seed is the hypostasis." The blood of the woman subsists in the seed of the man which becomes a hypostasis both to itself and to the blood of the woman. (2)

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(1) See pp. 102 and 103.

(2) *I Adv. Nest.* 43 (95, 221C). Ἐφ' ἑκάστης γὰρ τῶν γυναικῶν, σύλληψις γίνεται σπορᾶς ἐξ ἀνδρὸς καταβαλλομένης, καὶ τῆς ἀνδρὸς σπορᾶς

In the second treatise against the Nestorians, this manner of understanding the conception explains the words: "She had [i.e., received] neither seed nor anything else as a hypostasis, except God [the Word] alone." (1) Further on, in the same work, our author draws the following parallel: as the seed takes a body (2) from the blood of the woman, and yet there are not two persons, so also the Word of God was a perfect hypostasis, and even if He took animated flesh of the holy Virgin, there were not two persons, but there was one Person in two na-

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ἐστιν ἡ σύλληψις. καὶ ἡ σπορά ἐστιν ἡ ὑπόστασις, ἅμα τῇ συλλήψει χορηγούσης τῆς γυναικὸς τὰ οἰκεῖα αἵματα, καὶ συναφείας γινομένης, καὶ ἐν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς σπορᾷ ὑφισταμένης τῶν αἱμάτων, καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς σπορᾶς γινομένης αὐτοῖς ὑποστάσεως, ἑαυτῇ τε καὶ τοῖς γυναικείοις αἵμασι τῆς σπορᾶς γινομένης.

(1) 2 *Adv. Nest.* 23, *Theol. Quartalschr.*, p. 570. οὐδὲ ἔσχε σποράν ἢ ἄλλο τι ὑπόστασιν, εἰ μὴ τὸν θεὸν μόνον. παντὸς γὰρ βρέφους ὑπόστασις σπορά, ταύτης δὲ ὁ θεὸς Λόγος.

That hypostasis is to be understood in the full sense of the word "person", may be demonstrated from the identification of the words ὑπόστασις and πρόσωπον in the second treatise against the Nestorians. See Nos. 3 (561); 4 (562); 9 and 32 (563 and 575); οὔκ ἐστιν ὑπόστασις ἀπρόσωπος; 10 (563); 23 (570); 29 (573); 47 (579): 48 (580): Πᾶσα ὑπόστασις κεχωρισμένως καὶ ἰδιαιρέτως θέλει καὶ ἐνεργεῖ καὶ κινεῖται, καὶ ἴδίωμα ὑποστάσεώς ἐστι τοῦτο, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὑπόστασις καὶ πρόσωπον ταὐτόν.; 52 (582): Ὥσπερ οὐσία καὶ φύσις ταὐτόν ἐστι παρὰ τοῖς ἁγίοις πατράσιν; οὕτω καὶ ὑπόστασις καὶ πρόσωπον ταὐτόν ἐστι.

The words ὑπόστασις and πρόσωπον are also identified in the *Libellus Orthodoxiae:* No. 4, p. [47]: ὑπόστασιν ἤ... πρόσωπον; Nos. 13 and 3, pp. [49] and [46]: ὑπόστασιν ἤγουν πρόσωπον...

M. JUGIE says: "Notre docteur opte résolument pour la terminologie des Pères, qui désigne la personne par les trois termes: ὑπόστασις, ἄτομον, πρόσωπον. *Dialectica*, 43, col. 613 b. Chacun de ces termes exprime sans doute une nuance; mais, en fait, pour les Pères ils sont synonymes." *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, T. VIII, col. 710 C.

(2) The body and soul are created at the same time: Ἅμα δὲ τὸ σῶμα, καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ πέπλασται. FO ii, 12 (94, 921A).

tures. The action in the former case is natural, in the latter supernatural. (1) The consequence of this theory is the need of a virginal conception. "Since [the Word] had a Father in heaven, He was born of a virgin without a father, for it was impossible that a single person should be born of two fathers." (2) The comparison of the Word to a divine seed, therefore, clearly shows that He is the active principle of the conception. Where, then, is the role performed by the Holy Ghost? He prepared the holy Virgin for the conception. Furthermore, since the Son performs all His operations through (3) the Holy Ghost," so also the Incarnation. (4) It is accomplished "after the manner of the Creator, through the Holy Ghost," (5) " by the cooperation of the Holy Ghost," (6) "through the coming and operation of the Holy Ghost," (7) It is with reason, therefore, that the profession of faith: born

(1) 2 *Adv. Nest.* 29, p. 573. προσλαμβάνεται γὰρ καὶ ἡ σπορὰ σῶμα ἐκ τῶν αἱμάτων τῆς γυναικός, καὶ ἑτέρα μὲν ὑπόστασις ‹σπορᾶς, ἑτέρα δὲ ὑπόστασις› γυναικός καὶ τὰ αἵματα τῆς ὑποστάσεως τῆς γυναικός, ἀλλ' οὐ δύο σώματα οὐδὲ δύο ὑποστάσεις τῆς σπορᾶς καὶ τοῦ ἐκ τῆς γυναικὸς ὑπὸ τῆς σπορᾶς προσληφθέντος σώματος, ἀλλ' ἓν σῶμα καὶ μία ὑπόστασις ἐν δυσὶ φύσεσι ψυχῆς τε καὶ σώματος. οὕτω καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τελεία ἦν οὐ δύο ὑποστάσεις, ἀλλὰ μία ὑπόστασις ἐν δυσὶ φύσεσιν. ὅπερ γὰρ ἐκεί φυσικῶς, τοῦτο ὧδε ὑπὲρ φύσιν καὶ ἔννοιαν.

(2) *Exp. Fidei*, VIII (95, 426C).

(3) διά.

(4) Even the following passage is to be understood in this sense: "The flesh of the Lord is a vivifying spirit, because it was conceived by the vivifying Spirit." FO iv, 13 (94, 1152B). This passage is taken verbatim from ST. ATHANASIUS: *De Inc. et contra Arianos* 16, PG. 26, 1012B.

(5) FO iii, 2 (94, 985C).

(6) Ibid. iv, 14 (1160C).

(7) *I Adv. Nest.* 1 (95, 189A). SCHEEBEN, *op. cit.*, p. 839: "A ce point de vue, on peut entendre par la 'Vertu du Très-Haut' qui descend avec le Saint-Esprit, son véhicule, non seulement la force

of the Holy Virgin and of the Holy Ghost, is repeated so frequently.

The formation of Christ's body corresponds to the efficacy of the active principle. It was formed "after the manner of the Creator," not by gradual additions, but was perfect from the first instant. (1) This creation resembles the act by which God formed the body of Adam by His omnipotent power. (2)

Mary's Child was, then, truly a man. In conceiving Him, the holy Virgin fulfilled the part of the passive agent—the part of every Mother—whilst the Word of God, through the Holy Spirit, supplied the active principle. But even so miraculous a motherhood would not suffice to make of Mary the Mother of God. How she is in reality the holy Theotokos will be shown in the following section.

C. Mary, Mother of God

The holy Virgin became a mother by a miracle unique in its kind. But in order that we may call her, in all truth, the Theotokos, the Child whom she bore must have been God from the first moment of His conception. The Doctor of Damascus, always solicitous to safeguard the mystery of the Incarnation and the dignity of the Mother

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personnelle de Dieu lui-même, mais encore, du moins implicitement, la vertu générative du Père éternel qui se révèle dans cette personne et qui fait d'elle la vertu personnelle de Dieu."

(1) Supra, p. 35.

(2) FO iii, 1 (94, 984 C); and ibid. iv, 14 (1160C).

of the Incarnate Word, never lets an occasion pass to expose his cherished doctrines, especially against the Nestorians. It is in his first treatise against the latter that he makes the following profession of faith in the divinity of the Virgin's Son: "We believe and unhesitatingly confess that He who was born of the Father from all eternity, who alone is the Son and Word, consubstantial with the Father, and Son in nature, through whom all things were made, was, in these latter times, by the Father's good pleasure, conceived in the inviolate and immaculate womb of the holy Virgin like a divine seed, and without seed, without change or conversion, became Incarnate, that is, He made flesh, animated with a rational and intellectual soul, subsist in Himself. He became a perfect man, whilst He remained what He was before, perfect God." (1) In similar words, the Damascene had previously written in *De Fide Orthodoxa* that the divine Word, "without quitting the bosom of the Father and without circumscription, dwelt in the womb of the Holy Virgin." (2) In the *De Recta Sententia Liber*, he repeats the same teaching: "I believe that the only-begotten Son and word of God... who is one of the Holy Trinity, infinite in His bounty and ineffable in His love for man, by the good pleasure of the Father, without seed, became Incarnate of the Holy Ghost and of the holy and Ever-Virgin Mother of God." (3)

(1) *I Adv. Nest.* 43 (95, 221C).
(2) FO iii, 7 (94, 1008C).
(3) *De Recta Sententia Liber* 2 (94, 1424 C); *De Natura Composita* 9 (95, 124C); *De Sancta Trinitate* 1 (95, 9A); *I Adv. Nest.* 42 (214C); *Hom. in Sab. Sanct.* 18 (96, 617A); 1 *Dorm.* 8, 9 (721D ff).

The following paragraph from our guiding chapter is to the point; it will, incidentally, serve as an example of the manner in which our author proves Christ's divinity by a long series of Scriptural texts in his first treatise against the Nestorians: "The apostle again says: 'God sent His (only-begotten) Son, made of a woman. (1)' He does not say through (2) a woman, but of (3) woman. The holy apostle, therefore, signified that He Himself is the only-begotten Son of God, and God, who became man of the holy Virgin; and that the same one who was born of the Virgin is the Son of God, and God. He was born corporeally in so far as He became man, not dwelling in a previously formed man as in a prophet, but He Himself became man substantially (4) and truly, that is, He made flesh animated by a rational and intellectual soul subsist in His own Person... This is what the 'made of a woman' signifies; for how was the Son of God 'made under the law,' if He did not become a man consubstantial with us?" (5)

St. John Damascene clearly proclaims the divinity of Mary's Son, nor does he fail to see the natural consequence of this doctrine: the holy Virgin is, in truth, the Theotokos, the Mother of God. To substantiate this remark, it will suffice to recall the citations with which this chapter began.

The manner in which Jesus is God has inevitably been

(1) Gal. 4, 4.
(2) διά.
(3) ἐκ.
(4) οὐσιωδῶς.
(5) FO iii, 12 (94, 1030B).

touched upon in the preceding pages; the humanity of Christ has no existence of its own, but subsists in the hypostasis of the word of God. A hypostasis, according to the Damascene, may be defined: "an essence (1) with its accidents. Hence a hypostasis has what is common together with its distinctive marks, as also self-existence." (2) Elsewhere he expands this definition as follows: "A hypostasis is something singular and subsisting in itself, a substance with its accidents, having its own existence, indivisible and independent of all other hypostases, and having its own power of action." (3) What is most characteristic of personality is self-existence. Christ's humanity has its existence in the Word, (4) hence it has no other person than the divine.

A nature is always considered in its hypostasis, nor has it any existence outside of a hypostasis. "Whence we see that birth is not [predicated] of a nature, but of a person; for if it were [predicated] of a nature, born and unborn could not be considered in the [same] nature. The holy Mother of God, therefore, bore a person known to have two natures, divinity, born from the Father from all eternity, Incarnate in time... of her and born in the flesh." (5)

Mary, therefore, like all other mothers, brought forth a person. (6) But the person she bore was none other than

(1) οὐσίαν.
(2) FO iii, 6 (94, 1001D); *Dialectica* xxx (94, 593A).
(3) *De Duab.* Vol. 4 (95, 133A).
(4) ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ Λόγῳ τὴν ὕπαρξιν ἐσχηκέναι; FO iii, 12 (94, 1032C); *I Adv. Nest.* 1 (95, 189A).
(5) FO iv, 7 (94, 1113C).
(6) FO iv, 7 (94, 1113C). See *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 35, a. 1.

the second Person of the most Holy Trinity: "For the body did not have a special (peculiarem) hypostasis." (1) And more clearly still: "For the animated flesh of the Lord did not exist by itself, nor have its own hypostasis, nor was it by itself, 'this man', but belonged to the Word of God whom it had as hypostasis. Wherefore, I confess and proclaim in mind, in heart, and in word, that the holy Virgin Mary is properly and truly Mother of God because she bore the eternal and only-begotten Son of God, and God by nature, made flesh of her." (2)

In order more effectively to obviate the error of Nestorius, to avoid the possibility of Jesus Christ's having a personal existence before the union with the Word, our author teaches that the formation of the body, its animation by a rational soul, and its assumption by the divine Person, took place simultaneously. Thus, in *De Fide Orthodoxa*, he says: "The divine Word was not united to a body already existing in itself, but having taken up His abode in the womb of the holy Virgin, but not circumscribed by it, He made of the pure blood of the holy Ever-Virgin, flesh animated by a rational and intellectual soul, subsisting in His own person... Thus, as soon as the flesh existed, it existed as the flesh of the Word of God, as flesh animated by a rational and intellectual soul. Wherefore, we do not say that a man was deified, but that God became man." (3)

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(1) *Exp. Fidei* VIII (95, 427A).
(2) *De Recta Sententia Liber* (94, 1425D).
(3) FO iii, 2 (94, 985C). Cf. *Contra Jacob.* 79 (94, 1476C); Compare St. Sophronius, *In SS. Deiparae Annun.* 46, PG 87 (III), 3277C.

As noted above, the Word Himself came to create the body which He assumed. The angel had not said that the conception should take place first and then the indwelling of God, but that "the overshadowing of the Power of the Most High, that is, the conception of the Word, should take place first, and then (1) the existence of the flesh subsisting in the Word." (2) We find the same doctrine expressed more clearly against the Jacobites: "The Word Himself was made flesh, conceived of the Virgin, and brought forth a God with an assumed nature which was deified by Him as soon as it began to exist. Thus three things were accomplished at once: the assumption, the existence, and the deification of the man. The conception and the existence were accomplished simultaneously in a miraculous way, that is, the conception of the Word, and the existence of the flesh in the Word Himself." (3)

By assuming flesh, the simple hypostasis of the Son of God became composite, in so far as two natures existed in it. (4) "Before the Incarnation, the Person of the Word was simple, not composite, without a body and uncreated, but when it was made flesh it became the hypostasis of the flesh also, and was composed of divinity which it always possessed, and of the assumed flesh; and it bears the properties of the two natures." (5) "I say one com-

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(1) καὶ τότε.

(2) *I Adv. Nest.* 1 (95, 189A); cf. S. Sophronii, *Epistola Synodica*, PG 87 (III), c. 3161B.

(3) *Contra Jacob.* 83 (94, 1481C).

(4) See *Summ. Theol.* III q. 2, a. 4.

(5) FO iv, 5 (94, 1109D).

posite person, in order not to say 'pure God,' or 'mere man,' or to add a fourth person to the Trinity." (1) Jesus Christ is a composite person "composed of two perfect natures: of divinity and humanity. His person bears the characteristic and discriminating property of filiation of the Divine Word, by which He is distinguished from the Father and the Holy Ghost, and the characteristic and discriminating properties by which He differs from His Mother and all other men, as well as the properties of the divine nature by which He is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and the properties of the human nature by which He is one with His Mother and with us. And yet He differs from the Father and the Spirit, from His Mother and from us, in so far as He is at once God and man. For we recognize this as the most distinctive property of Christ." (2) The name Christ signifies the Person which exists "of two natures and in two natures." (3)

But why, it might be asked, did the second Person of the Holy Trinity, preferably to the first or third, become Incarnate of Mary? The holy Doctor himself asks and resolves the question in various writings. "We do not say that the Father was made flesh and born, nor the Holy Spirit, for the property of filiation is constant. Being Son, He [=the Word] again became Son. For being Son of God the Father, He became the Son of Man, one hypostasis composed of two natures." (4) Previously he had

(1) *De Recta Sent. Liber* 2 (94, 1425B).
(2) FO iii, 7 (94, 1010AB).
(3) FO iii, 3 (989B).
(4) *Contra Jacob.* 79 (94, 1476B); FO iv, 4 (1108A); *De Sancta Trin.* (95, 12).

already laid down the principle that, "it is not... permitted to say that one of the divine Persons has something which the others do not possess, save the manner of existence. Incarnation is a manner of second existence which befits only the only-begotten Son and Word, that the property [of filiation] might remain constant." (1)

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St. John Damascene's Christology, in so far as it has been necessary to consider it in its relation to the Divine Maternity, is substantially the same as that of St. Thomas. When the great Greek Father summarized the teachings of his predecessors in *De Fide Orthodoxa*, he had as guides the decisions of the œcumenical councils which had crystallized the church's doctrines against the errors of succeeding heretics, and the writings of the Fathers who formulated these decisions. His own refutations of the two principal heresies, some abettors of which were still surviving in the eighth century, call for our attention here. These heresies are Nestorianism and Monophysitism, both of which destroy the true sense of the Divine Maternity.

Against Nestorius, our author is particularly bitter. He rarely mentions the heresiarch's name without adding some vituperative epithet. Nor does he condemn a doctrine with which he is not well acquainted. He had an intimate knowledge of Nestorius' perverse doctrines and

(1) *Contra Jacob.* 52 (94, 1464A).

saw the pernicious consequences which resulted from them. Besides composing two treatises (1) against the Nestorians, the Damascene condemns their errors in all of his writings, as well as in his homilies. In *De Haeresibus* he dismisses the Nestorians very briefly, simply noting their attribution of two persons to Christ. (2) The false nature of the union of the two natures is thus characterized in *De Fide Orthodoxa:* it is not "personal, (3) nor a union of relation, nor of dignity, nor a union of wills, nor of equal honor, nor of benevolence, nor an interchange of names, as the abominable Nestorius, Diodorus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia, and their demoniacal company said, but a union of composition, (4) that is, a hypostatic (5) union..... We confess one hypostasis of the Incarnate Son of God existing in two perfect natures, proclaiming that the divinity and humanity have the same hypostasis, and that the two natures were preserved after the union..... We say that the union is substantial, (6) that is, true and not imaginary." (7) Nestorius could not conceive the idea of a nature that was not at the same time a person. (8)

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(1) *Dissertatio Adversus Nestorianorum Haeresim.* (95, 187-225), and Λόγος περὶ πίστεως κατὰ Νεστοριανῶν, *Theologische Quartalschrift* 83 (1901), pp. 555-599. The edition was prepared by Dr. Diekamp.

(2) *De Haeres.* 80 (94, 737C).

(3) προσωπικήν: Nestorius' fictive personality.

(4) κατὰ σύνθεσιν.

(5) καθ' ὑπόστασιν.

(6) οὐσιώδη.

(7) FO iii, 3 (94, 993B). Compare Conc. Constantinopolitanum II, Anathem. de tribus capitulis, Can. 4, (*Denzinger* 216).

(8) *Nestorius et la Controversie Nestorienne.* M. Jugie. Paris, 1912. p. 14; 91 ff.

Our author calls attention to the heretic's use of the words hypostasis and nature as synonymous." "Nestorius, that man-worshiper, Diodorus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia, professed two natures, and divided the hypostasis, so that in their opinion there were two persons corresponding to the number of natures. They, therefore, divided the one Lord Jesus Christ and constituted two, and two hypostases, because they considered hypostasis and nature one and the same thing." (1)

Evidently, such a doctrine makes Mary the mother of a mere man, and destroys the Divine Maternity. Nestorius was fully aware of this, and would admit the term "Theotokos" only when explained in accordance with his views. Christotokos is the word which corresponded to his false doctrines, and which he wished to bring into common use. St. John will not hear of it. "We never call the holy Virgin Christotokos, because in order to destroy the word Theotokos, the foul, abominable, and Jewish-minded Nestorius, that vessel of ignominy... invented that name to substitute it for the [title] of Mother of God, to dishonor her who alone has been truly honored above all creation. For king David and the high priest Aaron [may also be called] Christ, for kings and priests were anointed; and every God-bearing (2) man could be called Christ but not God in nature—just as the accursed Nestorius dared call Him who was born of the Virgin a God-bearer. Far be it from us to call Him, or to think of Him as a God-bearer, but [we think of Him and call Him] God

(1) *Contra Jacobitas* 2 (94, 1437B).
(2) θεοφόρος.

Incarnate. For the Word Himself was made flesh, having been conceived of the Virgin and brought forth as God in an assumed nature..." (1) He concludes one of the treatises against the Nestorians, as follows: "Consequently, we proclaim the holy Virgin Theotokos as having truly borne the Lord God made flesh of her. We know that she is the Christotokos, for she bore Christ. But since that scourge of God, Nestorius, used that term to destroy the use of the word Theotokos, we do not call her Christotokos, but, what is better, Theotokos. For other mothers also are Christotokoi—the mothers of prophets and kings—but the only Theotokos is the holy Mother of God, Mary." (2)

The Damascene's hatred foi the Nestorian heresy and his zeal for the Divine Maternity is reechoed in his homilies. On the feast of Mary's Nativity, the inflamed preacher, possibly addressing himself to heretics in the audience, or perhaps simply wishing to impress the true doctrine on the minds of his hearers, calls upon them to rejoice in the birth of the Virgin, who, according to Isaias, "will bear in her womb and bring forth a Son, and they will call his name Emmanuel, that is, God with us. Take note, Nestorius, and yield because 'God is with us': not a man, nor a legate, but God Himself will come and save us." (3) And elsewhere in the same homily: "Be ashamed, Nestorius, and place your hand over your

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(1) FO iii, 12 (94, 1032AB); cf. 2 *Adv. Nest.* 31, *Theol. Quartalschr.* 1901, p. 574.
(2) *I Adv Nest.* 43 (95, 224B); cf. FO iv, 14 (94, 1160D).
(3) *I Nativ.* 4 (96, 667A).

mouth; the Child is God: how then should she not be the Mother of God who bore Him?" (1)

The true nature of the hypostatic union, the simultaneity of the formation of the body of Christ and of its assumption by the Word, and the exclusion of the assumption of a preexisting human person, have been so frequently touched upon in the preceding pages that it is unnecessary to treat them anew here.

Whilst reacting against the error of Nestorius, the heretics known under the names of Eutychians, Monophysites, and Jacobites, (2) fell into the opposite error, and taught that, as there was but one person in Christ, so there was, after the union, but one nature. Against them, as against the Nestorians, the Damascene composed two treatises. (3) He thus rejects their tenets: "We say that there was a union of two perfect natures, the divine and the human; the union was not by way of a confusion, or a blending, or a confounding, or a mixture, as the accursed Dioscorus, Eutyches, (4) and Severus, and their foul company, said." (5)

The union proposed by the heretics leads to absurd consequences. This is pointed out at length in *De Fide Orthodoxa:* "The two natures were united to each other without conversion or change, so that neither did the divine nature

(1) Ibid. (668B).

(2) The Monophysites of Syria.

(3) *Contra Jacobitas* (94, 1433-1502), and, *De Natura Composita Contra Acephalos* (95, 111-126).

(4) LEQUIEN notes that the name of Eutyches is omitted in most of the better codices; this is true in a similar passage in *Contra Jacobitas* 2 (94, 1437B).

(5) FO iii, 3 (94, 993A).

lose its simplicity, nor was the human changed into the divine nature, nor annihilated, nor was one compound nature formed from the two. For a compound nature cannot be consubstantial with either of the natures of which it is formed... If, according to the heretics, Christ, after the union, consisted of one composite nature formed by the change of a simple into a compound nature, [this nature] is consubstantial neither with the Father, who has a simple nature, nor with His mother, for she is not composed of divinity and humanity..... But we teach that Christ was by no means of a composite nature..... The name Christ, belongs to the person, not univocally, but as indicating the existence of two natures. If Christ consisted of one composite nature and were consubstantial with the Father, the Father would also be composite and consubstantial with the flesh, which is absurd and the height of blasphemy." (1)

The source of the error of these heretics was their confounding the terms nature and hypostasis. (2) The solution lies in a clear understanding of the hypostatic union. "By no means was the difference of the natures destroyed by the union. For [the natures] (3) of which the Christ and Lord was composed remained unchanged and unconverted, but they were united in a composite hypostasis, without mixture or division, for we teach a hypostatic union. The hypostatic union protects the difference of the united natures, and evidently the unity of

(1) FO iii, 3 (94, 988B and 989A).
(2) See Ibid. 992A, and *Contra Jacobitas* 2 (94, 1437B).
(3) τὰ ἐξ ὧν.

person (1) remains. For, if the Word is not consubstantial with the flesh, nor separated from those elements which exist simultaneously in Him, it is not permitted to say one nature in Him, nor two hypostases." (2)

The famous *μία φύσις* of St. Cyril, which the heretics always cited in support of their error, is explained a number of times in the various writings of the Damascene. He resolves the difficulty in the way already commonly accepted in his time. The patriarch of Alexandria used the terms person and nature as meaning the same thing. (3) Thus, in the second letter to Succensus, he says "one nature" when he means to say "one person." For St. Cyril, the word *σεσαρκωμένη* indicated the complete humanity which the divine Word assumed. (4)

The Damascene himself speaks of the "deification" of the human nature of our Lord. The above arguments against the Monophysites suffice to show that he does not use this term in their sense. His own explanations are clear: "We confess the hypostatic union of the natures, the Incarnation of the Word, and the deification of the flesh..... In the Incarnation two natures, divinity and humanity, are united in the same hypostasis, and they mutually compenetrate each other, but the circumincession is effected by the divinity. For the divinity communicates to the flesh its own glory and splendor,

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(1) τοῦ προσώπου.

(2) *Contra Jacobitas* 79 (94, 1476D).

(3) See EBERLE, *op. cit.*, p. 94 ff. The question is here fully discussed.

(4) FO iii, 7 and 11 (94, 1012B and 1023B); *Contra Jacob.* 52 (1460D and 1500D); *De Natura Comp.* 3 (95, 116D).

nor is it changed by the passions of the flesh. Wherefore, the nature of the flesh is deified, but the nature of the Word is not made flesh." (1)

Since the body of Christ is the flesh of the Word of God in whom it exists, it is adorable. St. John explains this in the following passage, which is charming in its simplicity. "Christ is one, perfect God and perfect man. With one worship we adore Him in His immaculate flesh, together with the Father and the Spirit. We do not say that His flesh is not to be adored, for it is adored in the one hypostasis of the Word which became its person. We do not adore a creature. We do not adore it as mere flesh, but as united to the divinity..... I fear to touch a [glowing] coal because of the fire united to the wood. I adore the two natures of Christ because the divinity is united with the flesh." (2)

St. John Damascene's doctrine on the Divine Maternity is clear and complete. Mary performed the part of a true mother in the Incarnation by giving her immaculate blood to the Word, who through the Holy Ghost, formed a body for Himself; she bore the divine fœtus in her holy womb for nine months, and finally brought forth the Saviour in joy—not in sorrow. Her Child was God from the first moment of His existence, because the Word assumed the human nature into His Person without changing it; consequently Mary is not merely a Christotokos, but truly the Mother of God. Mary alone bears the glorious

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(1) *Contra Jacob.* 52 (94, 1461B); cf. FO iii, 12 (94, 1032B); *Exp. Fidei*, IX (95, 429A); 2 *Adv. Nest.* 31, *Theol. Quartalschr.* 1901, p. 574.
(2) FO iii, 8 (94, 1013C); ibid. iv, 3 (1105B).

title of Theotokos: "For there neither was, nor is, nor will be another Mother of God." (1)

Not only does the word Theotokos express the whole truth of Mary's relation to God and to her Son, but it is also an epitome of the Catholic doctrine on the Incarnation. "We justly and in truth call holy Mary the Mother of God, for this name summarizes the whole mystery of the Incarnation. For if she is Mother of God who bore, then most assuredly He who was born of her is God, and most assuredly likewise man. The Son of Man is evidently a man. But if He who was born of a woman is God, it is evident that He who was born of God according to the divine nature which had no beginning, is one with Him who in these latter days was formed of the Virgin according to the nature which is subject to time and which had a beginning, that is, the human nature. This indicates the one hypostasis, and two natures, and two births of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2) "And consequently, after the Incarnation of the Son of God we adore a Trinity: one Father, one Son of God and of the Virgin, the same both God and man, and one Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen." (3) If the Virgin's Son is adored as one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, what must be her dignity who was His worthy Mother?

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(1) 2 *Nest.* 3. *Theol. Quartalschr.* 83 (1901), p. 574; cf. *Canon in Dormit. Dei Genitricis* II (96, 1364A).
(2) FO iii, 12 (94, 1029C).
(3) *I Adv. Nest.* 43 (95, 224B).

D. Greatness of the Divine Maternity

When St. John Damascene described the sanctity of Mary's parents for us, he told us to judge them by their fruits. He applied the same principle when considering the holy Virgin herself, and found in it the source of all her greatness. Mary was predestined in the eternal Counsels in view of the Child she was to bear; she was prefigured in the Old Law; her birth and life were such as were befitting a worthy Mother of God. By the accomplishment of the mystery of the Incarnation she entered into the most intimate relations with the three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, and as a consequence, was raised above men and angels—and is above all praise.

God foresaw the beauty of her whom He had predestined to be the Mother of His only-begotten Son and took His delight in her: "Foreknowing you, the God of all loved you, and having loved you, predestined you, and in these latter days brought you into existence, and made you the God-bearing Mother and Nurse of His own Son and Word." (1)

The Divine Maternity is, in fact, the very reason for Mary's existence—an existence which was destined to be of a higher order than that of other men: "You will have a more excellent life than your nature warrants. But you will not have it for yourself, for you were not born for your own sake. Wherefore you will have it for God, for whose sake you came into life; and for this

(1) *I Nativ.* 7 (96, 672D).

reason you will cooperate to the utmost in the salvation of the whole world, so that the ancient decision of God concerning the Incarnation of the Word and our deification may be fulfilled through you." (1)

Adam fell; God's people rejected His law and lost the divine election. "For this reason a Virgin is now born, the adversary of our ancestral fornication; she is espoused to God Himself and bears..... the beloved Son of God in whom [the Father] is well pleased." (2)

This holy Virgin was not only predestined by God the Father, but "the prophets, inspired by the Holy Ghost, heralded her in advance." (3) The principal prophecy cited by St. John is that of Isaias (4) concerning the Virgin; but in the homilies on the feasts of the Nativity and of the Dormition, a great number of figures foreshadowing the Mother of God are cited and explained. Like the other Greek Fathers of his time, and especially of the following centuries (5), the Damascene saw Mary prefigured in all the vessels of the tabernacle, as well as in that sacred structure itself, and in a countless number of objects named in the Old Testament. The following passage from the first homily on the Dormition is a good example of this: "You are the royal throne in the presence of which the angels stand, looking upon their Creator and

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(1) *I Nativ.* 9 (96, 676A).
(2) Ibid. 8 (673B).
(3) *I Dorm.* 3 (96, 704A); cf. FO iv, 14 (94, 1156A).
(4) Compare *I Nativ.* 10 (96, 677B).
(5) See St. Andrew of Crete († 720), *Hom. in Nativ. B.V.M.* IV, (97, 868-873); St. Theodore, the Studite, *Hom.* 2 *in Nativ.*, among the works of St. John Damascene (96, 689-697).

Master who reposes there. You are the spiritual Eden, more holy and divine than the former; for in that one the terrestrial Adam dwelt, whilst in you the Lord from heaven dwelt. The ark which preserved the seed of the second world prefigured you. For you bore Christ, the salvation of the world, who washed away sin..... The burning bush (1) announced you, the divinely written tables [prefigured you], the ark of the Law made you known beforehand; the golden urn and the candlestick, the table and the flowering rod of Aaron were plainly figures of you. For from you the Fire of divinity,... the Word of God, the sweetest heavenly Bread, the unspeakable Name which is above every name, the eternal and unapproachable Light, the heavenly Bread of Life, the uncultivated Fruit, was produced in a corporeal form." (2) Let the following parallel from the homily on the Nativity conclude the series: "To-day, He who in bygone days formed a firmament out of water,... prepared a Heaven of terrestrial nature on earth, and this Heaven is truly far more divine and marvelous than the former. For He who placed the sun in the former, will make the Sun of Justice rise in the latter." (3)

Amongst other figures treated at greater length elsewhere in this treatise, we may mention the ladder of Jacob by which the Word descended upon the earth (4); the Davidical fleece, into which the Son of the King of

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(1) Compare *I Nativ.* 10 (96, 677B).
(2) *I Dorm.* 8 (712B).
(3) *I Nativ.* 3 (96, 664C).
(4) Ibid. 665A; *I Dorm.* 8 (712B).

all descended like a gentle rain; the mountain of Daniel from which the angular rock, Christ, was hewn without the labor of hands, as the Saviour from the Virgin's unspotted womb; Ezechiel's gate, through which the Lord passed without opening it, as Jesus through His Mother's virginal womb; (1) and finally the summit holier than Sion. (2)

As the sacraments of the Old Law were sacred because of Him towards whom they pointed, so the figures of Mary were honorable because of their prototype. "Be it known that the ark on all sides covered with gold, the golden urn of manna, the candlestick, the table, and all the ancient vessels cannot bear comparison with her [Mary]. They were honored as types of her, figures of the true prototype." (3)

Foreknown in prophecy and figure, Mary became the desired one of the ages; each century was anxious to see her advent. St. John dramatically describes their rivalry to us: "The centuries vied with one another as to which one should be made glorious by your [Mary's] birth, but the predetermined Counsel of God (4) which made the ages, prevailed over their struggle, and the last, [that is], those which were privileged with your birth, were made the first." (5)

We have seen that Mary was the fruit of the prayers

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(1) *I Dorm.* 9 (96, 713A).

(2) *I Nativ.* 6 (669C); The series is mentioned summarily in the poem, *In Festum Annuntiationis B. Dei Genitricis* (96, 953A).

(3) *I Nativ.* 6 (672A).

(4) βουλή, the Son of God, according to the Damascene.

(5) *I Nativ.* 7 (672C).

of her pious parents. An angel announced her conception to them, "for it was fitting that she who was to be the Mother according to the flesh of the only truly perfect God, should not hold a second place to anyone." (1) This principle is the Damascene's criterion whenever there is question of Mary's dignity. When God made the sterile Anne fertile, nature yielded to grace, and she brought forth "the most beautiful and sweetest daughter, the lily among thorns, from the most noble and royal root of David." (2) Mary is the "rose which grew up from among the thorns, [that is], the Jews, and which filled all with a divine perfume." (2)

The devout preacher calls upon all nations and times to celebrate with him the "birthday of universal joy." (3) But Mary's birth is an especial object of joy to the aged parents, to whom he describes the child's dignity in the following terms: "Rejoice, blessed Anne, that you have brought forth a girl, (4) for this girl will be the Mother of God, the Gate of Light, the Fount of Life, and will destroy the crime of her sex. All the rich among the people will entreat the countenance of this girl. (5) The kings of the nations will worship this girl and offer her gifts. To God, the King of all, you will offer this child invested with the beauty of virtues, like golden trappings, and adorned with the graces of the spirit, the glory of which is from

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(1) *I Dorm.* 6 (708D).
(2) *I Nativ.* 6 (96, 669A).
(3) Ibid. 1 (661B).
(4) θηλύ.
(5) See Ps. 44, 13-14, and 67, 30.

without. (1) For the glory of every woman is man—a glory coming from without—but the glory of the Mother of God is from within, the fruit of her womb..." (2)

Since the sanctity of the Blessed Virgin's childhood, which made her worthy to become God's Mother, will be treated in a subsequent chapter, we shall immediately pass on to the relations of Mary with the Son of God, "who is her only ornament" (3), the true source of all her greatness.

When the fullness of time had come, Gabriel brought his heavenly message to Mary, and the greatest of miracles was wrought in her: "Being perfect God, [the Word] became perfect man and accomplished of all new things the newest (4)—the only new thing under the sun—through which the infinite power of God is manifested. For what is greater than God becoming man?" (5) In becoming the Mother of God, Mary fulfilled the designs of God in her regard, "cooperating to her utmost" in the Incarnation of the Word. "O Virgin, born of the root of Jesse, you surpass the bounds of mortal nature. (6) You brought forth the Eternal Word, since He was pleased to pass through your sealed womb by a strange emptying [of Himself]." (7)

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(1) ἔξωθεν.
(2) *I Nativ.* 9 (673C).
(3) κόσμος; 2 *Dorm.* 1 (96, 721C).
(4) Eccles. 1, 10.
(5) FO iii, 1 (94, 984B).
(6) τῶν βροτῶν τῆς οὐσίας.
(7) *In Theogoniam* (96, 821A); cf. *I Dorm.* 8 (96, 712B); cf. Philip. ii, 7: "But [He] emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant."

Mary was the instrument (1) of God's condescending mercy towards men, hence her elevation above all creatures. The eloquent preacher exclaims in admiration: "O miracle, surpassing all miracles! A woman is placed above the seraphim, because God is seen become 'a little lower than the angels.' (2) Let the most wise Solomon be silent, and let him not say: 'Nothing under the sun is new.' O Virgin bedewed with the grace of God, holy Temple of God, which the spiritual Solomon, the Prince of Peace, having built, inhabited; not a temple adorned with inanimate rocks, but shining with the Spirit instead of gold; instead of precious stones, having that most precious pearl, Christ." (3) "Truly, you [Mary] have become more honorable than all creation, for the Maker took His portion, the first fruits of our nature, from you alone." (4)

When he contemplates the sublime relations of Mary with her Son, of a creature with her God, words fail the devout orator to describe what his heart feels. (5) The greatness of the miracle of the Incarnation enraptures his soul. "He whose throne is heaven, and the earth His footstool made His handmaid's womb His ample dwelling, and wrought in her the newest mystery of all. Being God, He becomes man, and is born after the ordinary time of gestation, but in a manner surpassing nature, [for] he opens the womb without destroying the seal of virginity. He who is the Reflection of Glory, the Image

(1) *I Dorm.* 3 (96, 705A).
(2) Hebr. 2, 9.
(3) Eccles. 1, 10; *I Nativ.* 10 (96, 676D).
(4) Ibid. 7 (672C).
(5) Ibid. 2 (664BC).

of the person of the Father, by the word of whose mouth all things are made, is carried in terrestrial arms as an infant. O truly divine miracles! O mysteries surpassing nature and understanding! O virginal prerogatives surpassing the condition of man! What is this great mystery concerning you, O sacred Mother and Virgin? 'Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb!' (1) Blessed art thou in the generations of generations, alone worthy to be called blessed. Behold all nations call you blessed as you said." (2)

Mary's greatness, as appears from the foregoing words, is founded principally on her bearing of the Son of God. Yet her cooperation with God's merciful design for our eternal welfare brought her into the most intimate relations with the other Persons of the Most Holy Trinity as well.

The Holy Ghost prepared the Blessed Virgin to become the worthy Mother of God. The divine Sanctifier visited her frequently, sanctified her and bedewed her with His divine grace. (3) "She is entirely the Bridal Chamber (4) of the Spirit, wholly the city of the living God which the waves of the river gladden, that is, the waves of the graces of the Holy Spirit. She is all beautiful, wholly pleasing to God. (5) The Holy Spirit preserved her immaculate, as we have seen, to be the "Spouse of God" (6)

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(1) Luke 1, 42.
(2) *I Dorm.* 8 (96, 712AB).
(3) *I Dorm.* 3 (96, 704A).
(4) παστάς.
(5) *I Nativ.* 9 (96, 676D).
(6) Ibid. 7 (672B).

—an all-pure Spouse" (1)—and the Mother of His Son.

St. John never calls our Lady the Spouse (2) of the Holy Ghost, but rather the "Spouse of God". In a preceding section of this chapter, (3) it was shown that Mary is the Spouse of God the Father. She is the "Spouse whom the Father espoused"; "she is espoused to God Himself." Our author saw this relation prefigured in Jacob's ladder. In the homily on our Lady's Nativity, he says: "Today the Son of the carpenter... prepared for Himself an animated Ladder, whose base is planted upon the earth, but whose top reaches heaven itself. God rests on it. Jacob saw its figure. By it God descended without change, or rather, inclining Himself was seen on earth, and dwelt amongst men... The spiritual Ladder, that is, the Virgin, is planted on the earth, for she is born of the earth; but her head reaches heaven. The Head of every woman is man; but of her who knew not man, God the Father is the head." (4)

Associated with the heavenly Father in the Incarnation of the Son of God, a mission for which she was prepared by the special effusions of the grace of the Holy Ghost, Mary surpasses men and angels in dignity; she is the Queen and Mistress of all. Since she is born of their race, men rightly glory in God's bounties to her, for through

(1) Νύμφη πάναγνε. *In Theophania,* (96, 832A).

(2) The Damascene knows and uses the expression "Spouse of Christ". In the *Laudatio S. Barbarae Martyris,* he calls our Lord the Spouse of the virgin martyr, and St. Barbara, the spouse of Christ. (νυμφίος... νύμφη). No. 19 (96, 808A); nos. 22 and 23 (812C and 813B); see *Hom. in Sab. Sanct.* 39 (96, 644A).

(3) See p. 42.

(4) *I Nativ.* 3 (96, 665A); *I Dorm.* 8 (712D).

her they have been raised to a "better and more marvelous society." (1)

To men, therefore, Mary came as a token of God's special love for them. "But, if you please, who is she, and whence, and in what manner was she conceded to this present life—a gift which of all God's gifts is the highest and at the same time the dearest?" (2) In her, our fallen nature can again present a pleasing offering to God: "O blessed couple, Joachim and Anne, all creation is indebted to you. For through you it offered to the Creator a gift, of all gifts the most excellent; a chaste Mother, alone worthy of the Creator." (3)

Mary's unique position among all the descendants of Adam is expressed in phrases like the following: "rightly all nations call you blessed as the choicest glory of humanity." (4) "You are the ornament of the human race, (5) the boast of all creation, (6) by which it has been truly blessed. For He who was in no way contained at first, is encompassed by you. He who could not be seen, having revealed His face [through you], is visible to our eyes." (7) "O daughter, worthy of God, you are the beauty of human nature, (8) the reinstatement of Eve, our first mother,

(1) *I Nativ.* 8 (673A).
(2) *I Dorm.* 4 (705C).
(3) *I Nativ.* 2 (96, 664A).
(4) ἐπίλεκτον δόξαν τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος. *I Nativ.* **11** (680A).
(5) ἐγκαλλώπισμα.
(6) Several of these expressions make us think of WORDSWORTH'S "Our tainted nature's solitary boast," in the sonnet: "*The Virgin.*" Compare also ST. SOPHRONIUS, *In SS. Deiparae Annun.* 18 ,PG 87 (III) 3237C: Ἀνθρώπων τὴν φύσιν ἐκόσμησας, Ἀγγέλων τὰς τάξεις ἐνίκησας.
(7) *I Dorm.* 3 (701C).
(8) τὸ κάλλος τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως.

for through your childbearing, what was fallen, is raised again. O most holy daughter, the ornament (1) of women," your obedience has repaired Eve's fall. (2) "She will destroy the accusation against women." (3) Even the priests proclaim Mary their "pride", (4) because through her the Levitical priesthood was transferred to Juda. (5)

Through Mary, the human nature has been the instrument for the betterment of all creation. "Through her the Creator changed all nature for the better through the medium of the human nature. For if man has been constituted the mean between mind and matter, he is the bond of the whole visible and invisible creation. Having united Himself to the human nature, through it the Maker of the world, the Word of God, was united to every creature." (6)

Beneath the angels in nature, Mary is not beneath them in dignity. The holy Virgin is above all the choirs of the angels; and at her death, all without exception paid their homage to her. (7) She is "wholly beautiful, wholly pleasing to God; for, having surpassed the cherubim and having been raised above the seraphim, she is near to God." (8) Daniel's mountain from which the corner stone

(1) ἀγλάϊσμα.
(2) *I Nativ.* 7 (672B).
(3) *I Nativ.* 9 (96, 673D).
(4) καύχημα *I Nativ.* 11 (680A).
(5) See above, p. 8.
(6) *I Nativ.* 1 (96, 661C). Compare St. Modestus of Jerusalem, *Encomium in B. Virginem* VII, PG 86bis 3294B: δι' ἧς ἀνεκαινίσθη τὰ σύμπαντα...
(7) 3 *Dorm.* 5 (96, 761B).
(8) *I Nativ.* 9 (676D). Compare the following from the doubtful *Hom.* 1 *in Annun.* (96, 647A): "...quæ simplici divinitati proxima est,

was to be hewn, was a fitting figure of her elevation: "The Mountain of the Lord, the most visible of all is born, surpassing and transcending every hill and mountain, that is, every height of angels or men... the fertile Mountain in which God was pleased to dwell." (1)

By her elevation above all creatures, Mary deserves to be called the Queen and Mistress of all. The Damascene sees this prophetically foreshadowed in the name which was given her: "Grace, therefore, for this is what Anne signifies, bears the Mistress, (2) for the name of Mary means this (3); for she truly became the Mistress of all created things, who became the Mother of the Creator." (4) Our author never tires of repeating that Mary's sovereignty is the natural consequence of the Divine Maternity.

After her holy death, "the Queen, Mistress and Ruler, (5) the Mother of God, who is truly the Theotokos, was transported to the royal mansions of the heavens," (6) where she rules together with Jesus. (7) "Indeed, she is properly and truly the Mother of God and Mistress, the Ruler over all creatures, who is the servant and Mother of the Creator." (8) Above the angels at her birth, Mary

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proprius ad Trinitatem Sanctam accedens, quæ altitudine cherubicis turmis sublimior es, et seraphicis agminibus excelsior." These words recall the words of Cajetan: "quæ sola ad fines deitatis propria operatione naturali attigit." (In II II, 103, a. 4, ad. 2). The context, however, is different.

(1) *I Nativ.* 6 (669C).
(2) κυρίαν.
(3) By derivation from the Syriac.
(4) FO iv, 14 (94, 1157B).
(5) ἡ βασιλὶς, ἡ Κυρία, ἡ δέσποινα.
(6) *I Dorm.* 12 (96, 720A).
(7) 3 *Dorm.* 4 (96, 760B).
(8) FO iv, 14 (94, 1161A); 2 *in Dorm.* 1 (721D).

became their Queen after her glorious Assumption: Anne bore a daughter "who is above the angels and is now their Queen." (1)

We find Mary proclaimed Queen of all, even when we least expect it; thus, for example, in the sermon preached in honor of St. Barbara, she is called "the most holy Theotokos and first Mother, Virgin and Mother of God, who was the first and only one who glorified the feminine sex, who reigns over all men and women, over all in heaven and on earth, as Mother of Him who is the Master of all things." (2) The holy preacher here says that Mary alone has glorified her sex, whereas he has just described the virgin martyr's triumph which he calls an object of just pride for all women. His purpose is, undoubtedly, to insist on the unique manner in which the holy Theotokos is the glory of women.

As Mother of God, Mary "has alone been truly honored above all creation," (3) and is "alone worthy to be called blessed." (4) The consequence is, that not only is she worthy of all praise, but she is above all praise. (5) If the Greeks celebrated the feasts of their gods and kings, how much greater reason have we for honoring the Mother of God, "through whom the sad plight of the whole human race, through whom the misfortune of our first mother Eve was changed into joy?" (6) Furthermore,

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(1) *I Nativ.* 6 (669A).
(2) *Laud. S. Barbarae Mart.* 20 (96, 809A).
(3) FO iii, 12 (94, 1032B).
(4) μόνη ἀξιομακάριστος *I Dorm.* 8 (96, 712B).
(5) 3 *Dorm.* 4 (96, 760D).
(6) *I Nativ.* 1 (661B).

"if the memory of the just is celebrated with praises, who would not praise her who is the source of justice and the treasury of holiness... She does not stand in need of our praise—she who is the Tabernacle of God, the City about which glorious things have been said, as the inspired David foretold of her, saying: 'Glorious things are said of thee, O the City of God.' (1) For, whom shall we understand by the city of the invisible and incomprehensible God who holds all things in His own hand, save her alone, who in a manner above her nature and essence encompassed the transcendent Word of God; about whom God Himself said glorious things. For what is more glorious than to have received the ancient Counsel of God?" (2) "Neither human tongue, nor the supercosmic mind of the angels can worthily praise her through whom it was given us to behold clearly the glory of God." (3)

We cannot even celebrate her passage from this earth in a fitting manner. "There is no man who can praise the holy decease of the Mother of God worthily, not even if he had a myriad of tongues... For she surpasses the law of praise." (4)

Note how the author of the treatise on the sacred images uses the figure of the burning bush to show the dignity of the holy Theotokos: "The [burning] bush was an image of the Mother of God. When Moses was about to

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(1) Ps. 86, 3.
(2) *I Dorm.* 1 (96, 700A).
(3) Ibid. 700B. In the hymn *In Pentecosten*, attributed to St. John Damascene, we read the following: "The rhetorical art is not capable of celebrating you [Mary] worthily." (PG 96, 840A).
(4) 2 Dorm. 1 (721BC).

approach it, God said to him: 'Put off the shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' (1) If, therefore, the ground on which the image of the Mother of God was seen by Moses, is holy ground, how much more so the image. For I not only say that it is holy, but I do not hesitate to call it the holy of holies." (2) We may add: If the place where the image of the Mother of God appeared is holy, and the image itself the holy of holies, what must be the incomparable dignity of her who is represented? She is, indeed, "more excellent than all generations and all creation." (3)

The Damascene's ardent love for the Mother of God and his appreciation of her surpassing greatness help us to understand his vehemence against Nestorius. In the words of St. Gregory of Nazianzum, (4) he thus anathematizes the heretic: "If anyone does not confess the holy Virgin to be the Mother of God, he is without the favor of the Divinity." (5) Toward the end of the homily on the Nativity, we find the following words with which we will conclude this chapter on the Divine Maternity: "Those who confess you Mother of God are blessed, those who refuse to do so, accursed." (6)

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(1) Exod. 3, 5.
(2) *De Imag. Orat.* II, 20 (94, 1308A).
(3) 2 *Dorm.* 6 (96, 732C).
(4) *Epist. ad Cledonium* (PG 37, 137).
(5) *I Nativ.* 4 (96, 668B).
(6) Ibid. 11 (680A).

CHAPTER III

PERPETUAL VIRGINITY

A HUMBLE monk in the Laura of St. Sabas, St. John Damascene highly esteemed the life of virginity which he had embraced. He would not finish his great summary of our holy faith without inserting a chapter (1) in defense and praise of this most truly Christian virtue. Virginity was natural to man in the beginning, he tells us; it flourished in Paradise until the Fall. After Adam had sinned, matrimony was instituted for the preservation of our race. The spiritual fecundity which results from a virginal life is amply demonstrated by the supernatural power of Elias, Eliseus, Daniel, and others in the Old Testament.

Jesus Christ, however, has shown us the perfection of virginity in His birth and in His life. He has not made it a law for all, but has taught us by His example, and merited for us the strength to follow Him.

Matrimony is good, because it prevents many sins and brings children into the world, but celibacy is better. "Virginity is the mode of life of the angels, the property of every incorporeal nature... In as far, therefore, as an angel is more excellent than a man, in so far virginity is more honorable than marriage... Matrimony is good for

(1) FO iv, 24.

those who are not continent; but virginity is better [in itself]; it increases the soul's fecundity, and offers prayer to God as a seasonable fruit." (1)

Mary's virginity is so eminent that since the earliest times (2) it has been used as her distinctive title. Just as for us there is only one who is preeminently the "Blessed Virgin," so for the Damascene the Mother of God is always "ἡ ἁγία παρθένος, the ἀειπαρθένος: the holy Virgin, the Ever-Virgin," She is "more resplendent than the sun by [her] virginity, "—"a Rose most brilliant by her virginity." (3) Our author's doctrine on this subject is a recapitulation of the accepted teaching of the preceding Fathers.

a. Preparation.—The fruit of the chaste marital life of her holy parents, Mary cherished the holy virtue from her earliest youth. Never did the shadow of uncleanness fall upon her. Thus, the infant "enjoyed the chaste kisses of her parents alone, that she might in all things ever cultivate virginity." (4) The modesty of her dress and bearing, the reserve of her character, and the constant

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(1) FO iv, 24 (94, 1205 ff).

(2) See NEUBERT, *op. cit.* On page 91, he asks himself whether the name of virgin has not already become Mary's proper designation at the time of St. Justin. On page 227 he concludes: "Avant même le concile de Nicée, Marie était donc déjà la sainte Vierge." — cf. JANSSENS, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

Note also the following emphatic statement of ST. EPIPHANIUS: "Who in any generation has ever dared to utter the name of Holy Mary and did not at once, when asked, straightway add the title of Virgin?" (*Haer.*, Lib. III, 78, vi: PG 42, c. 705D).

(3) 3 *Dorm.* 4 (96, 760B); ibid. 5 (761A).

(4) *I Nativ.* 6 (96, 669B).

application of her spirit to heavenly things have been noted in the first chapter of this study.

She shunned persons of the opposite sex to such an extent that she was frightened even at the appearance of the archangel Gabriel. "She was troubled by the word [of his salutation], being unaccustomed to conversing with men. For she had firmly resolved to preserve her virginity." (1) This resolution is the closest reference we find in St. John to the vow of chastity which Mary is commonly conceded to have made. (2)

The Fathers frequently speak of purity from every stain of sin as being the perfection of virginal purity. We find the same doctrine here: "'Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God'..... You found the abyss of grace, you who preserved intact the vessel of a twofold virginity; for you preserved the virginity of the soul no less than that of the body." (3) He immediately adds that the latter was consequent upon the former.

This perfect virginity was an apt preparation for Mary's future high vocation. "She separated her mind from all desire of the world and the flesh, and thus preserved her soul as well as her body chaste as was befitting her who was to receive her God into her womb." (4) Similarly,

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(1) *I Dorm.* 7 (96, 709A); cf. *I Nativ.* 11 (96, 680A): the same incident is used to show that she was unapproachable to men.

(2) See Index Secundus, (PG 96, 1555) of the works of St. John Damascene: under the name of Mary, LEQUIEN refers to this same passage to show that Mary vowed virginity. It may be remarked that the Fathers, following St. Augustine, have concluded from Mary's answer that she was bound by a vow.

(3) *I Dorm.* 7 (96, 709B).

(4) FO iv, 14 (94, 1160A).

in the homily on the Nativity, St. John says that Joachim and Anne, "living together chastely and holily, bore the Treasury of Virginity who was a virgin before childbirth, a virgin in childbirth, and a virgin after childbirth; who alone ever cherished virginity in mind, in soul, and in body." (1)

Having considered the chaste life of our Blessed Lady before the Annunciation, we shall now follow our author's development of the consecrated formula: "Virgo ante partum, et in partu, et post partum." (2)

b. Ante partum.—Mary was a virgin ante partum, that is, she conceived as a virgin, without the cooperation of a man. The Damascene mentions the Massalians as opposed to this doctrine, since they taught "that seed and the Word descended (3) into Mary." (4) He, however, is very clear in his explanation of the Catholic faith. "Thus, she conceived the Son of God, not by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man, i.e., *non ex congressu et semine*, but by the good pleasure of the Father and the cooperation of the Holy Spirit... For as... [Eve] was formed from Adam *citra coitum*, so... [Mary] also bore the New Adam... He Who was begotten of the Father without a mother, is born of a woman without a father." (5)

This mystery is counted amongst those which we know

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(1) *I Nativ.* 5 (96, 668C); cf. *Libellus Orthodoxiae* 7, *Damascenica*, p. [48].
(2) This patristic formula is the basis of FO iv, 14.
(3) ἔπεσεν.
(4) *De Haeres. Liber.* 80 (94, 732B).
(5) FO iv, 14 (94, 1160B) ff; cf. ibid. III, 1 (984C).

and which we can express in words. (1) But "we neither know, nor can we express... how the Only-begotten Son of God, having emptied Himself, became man from the virginal blood, formed by a different law from nature's." (2) And yet, in a later chapter he ventures to say that the manner of this marvelous conception resembles the act of creation. The Word formed a body for Himself from "the holy and most pure blood" of the Virgin, "not by seminal procreation, but after the manner of the Creator, (3) through the Holy Ghost." (4) Nothing is impossible to God. The Damascene bids Mary's panegyrists explain "how the material body of an earthly (5) nature..... received the all-consuming Fire of the divinity, and like pure gold, remained unharmed." He himself tells us: "These things were done by God's will; for when God wills, all things are possible, but they are impossible when He does not will them." (6)

We have had occasion to note, when treating of the active principle in the production of Christ's body, that the Damascene repeats the expressions "without seed", "born of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary", "from her all pure and untainted blood", and the like, a countless number of times. (7) In the presence of such statements, there is no room left for the cooperation of a man.

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(1) FO i, 2 (94, 792D).
(2) Ibid. (793B).
(3) οὐ σπερματικῶς, ἀλλὰ δημιουργικῶς.
(4) FO iii, 2 (94, 985B).
(5) χορτῶδες.
(6) 2 *Dorm.* 7 (96, 733A).
(7) Above, pp. 33-34.

For our author, the greatness of this miracle is such that in the *Disputatio Christiani cum Saraceno*, he places as a first proof of Christ's divine mission that "He was conceived without seed by His Mother—without [the cooperation of] a man—and born of a virgin." (1) Similarly, in order to explain the manner of the transubstantiation of bread into the Body of Christ, he says that it is accomplished by the Holy Ghost, (2) "just as the Lord took flesh unto Himself from the holy Mother of God through the Holy Spirit, and made it subsist in Himself." (3)

This unusual conception, as we have seen above, was wrought through the hearing, and consequently without the heat of passion. "The Creator of the heavens... made Himself an Infant in her without the action of seed... and was wholly formed in her without passion." (4)

The virginal conception was prefigured by the mountain of Daniel, by the three young men in the fiery furnace, and by the table on which the loaves of proposition were placed. "What is the mountain of Daniel from which the cornerstone, Christ, was cut without the use of man's knife? Is it not you who conceived without seed and still remained a virgin?" (5) As Daniel's companions were not consumed in the roaring flames, so the Virgin's virtue remained intact although she conceived the Word of God

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(1) *Disp. Christiani cum Saraceno* 8 (94, 1597B). — This work is not directly from the hands of the Damascene.
(2) This is the commonly accepted doctrine in the Greek church.
(3) FO iv, 13 (94, 1145A).
(4) 2 *Dorm.* 2 (96, 725B); see above, p. 32; *I Nativ.* 3 (94, 665C).
(5) *I Dorm.* 9 (96, 713B).

in her chaste womb. The Damascene draws this parallel in his hymn on the Nativity of Our Lord: "The flame-enwrapped young men of old are an image of the unconsumed womb of the Virgin, which, [whilst] conceiving supernaturally, remained sealed. The Flame which accomplished both by the same miracle arouses the people [to sing] this hymn." (1) And finally, the Divine Coal left her unharmed: "To-day, [that is, on the feast of the Assumption], the terrestrial Table which bore the heavenly Bread of life, the Coal of divinity, (2) without the use of the conjugal act, (3) is transported from the earth to heaven." (4) Mary is, indeed, the "new volume" which God, the Word, prepared for Himself, "and in which the Spirit... was to write." Placed into Joseph's hands, it was not read. (5)

c. In partu.—Having conceived the Word of God without the cooperation of man, Mary brought her divine Son into the world without ceasing to be a virgin. Whilst rejecting the supposition that Jesus issued from Mary's side, our author is very explicit in his statement of Mary's virginity *in partu.*

"As He who was conceived, preserved her a virgin,

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(1) *In Theogoniam* (96, 824B); cf. *Canon in Dorm.* VIII (96, 1365C).

(2) The reference here is to the gold-covered table (Exod. 25, 23-30) on which the loaves of proposition were placed, and to the altar of incense having live coals on its grate (Exod. 30, 1 ff). The Greek Fathers saw figures of Mary, as Mother of God, in all of the sacred vessels of the temple, as in the temple itself. For a series of such figures used by our author, see *Hom. I in Dorm.* 8 (96, 712B ff). See above pp. 66 and 68.

(3) ἀπειρογαμῶς.

(4) 3 *Dorm.* 2 (96, 756A).

(5) *I Nativ.* 7 (96, 672A).

who conceived, so in birth He kept her virginity unharmed, only passing through (1) her, having kept [her womb] closed; (2) for the conception indeed was through the hearing, but the birth was *per eam partem per quam exire foetus consuescit*, even if some recount the fable that He was born *per Dei Genitricis latus.*" (3) Similarly in the first homily on the Assumption: "Being God, He [the Word] became man, and was born in the ordinary time of gestation, but in a manner surpassing nature, opening the womb without destroying the seal of virginity." (4) And in the second homily on the same feast, the holy preacher puts the following words on Mary's lips: "Keep [the body] safe in which you were pleased to dwell, and which you preserved virginal when you were born." (5)

As an indication of the extraordinary manner of the Savior's birth, our author insists, that, contrary to the universal condemnation, "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children," (6) Mary's childbearing was entirely painless. "For her for whom pleasure did not precede, pain did not follow; in reference to which the prophet says: 'Before her time came to be delivered, (she fled) and brought forth a man child.' And again: 'Before she was in labor, she brought forth.'" (7) Similarly, in the second homily on the Assumption, he asks how death should touch her "who

(1) Cf. Ezech. 44, 2.
(2) τὰ κλεῖσθρα... μὴ λυμηνάμενος.
(3) FO iv, 14 (94, 1161A).
(4) *I Dorm.* 8 (96, 712A). Cf. *De Sancta Trin.* 1 (95, 9B); and 2 *Dorm.* 14 (96, 741B); *Canon in Dorm.* VI (96, 1365A).
(5) 2 *Dorm.* 10 (96, 736C).
(6) Gen. 3, 16.
(7) Is. 66, 7. FO iv, 14 (94, 1160D).

conceived the Person of the Word of God... *sine voluptate ac viri congressu,* and fittingly bore Him without pain. "(1) It is only at the foot of the cross that she suffered the pangs which she escaped in childbirth. (2)

But how was this stupendous miracle accomplished? The only adequate explanation of the mystery of the Virgin-Mother is God's infinite power. As in His glorious Resurrection, as in His visits to His apostles in the closed room of their retreat, so here, "it was not impossible for Him to pass through the gates without breaking the seals." (3) In his Paschal hymn, our author sings: "You preserved the seals unharmed, O Christ, when you arose from the tomb; you did not harm the seal (4) of the Virgin in your birth." (5)

The birth of the Saviour did not harm Mary's virginity; on the contrary, it consecrated it. If "the conception without seed, the divine indwelling, the parturition without corruption became the security and true confirmation... of all the incomprehensible blessings" (6) for her, the conservation of her immaculate purity would hardly be excluded.

Like the virginal conception, the virgin birth was foreshadowed in the Old Law. "Let the most divine Ezechiel come and show us the closed gate, penetrable to the Lord whilst unopened. Let him show us the ac-

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(1) No. 3 (96, 728B).
(2) FO iv, 14 (94, 1161D), and 2 *Dorm.* 14 (96, 741B).
(3) FO iv, 14 (1161A).
(4) τὰς κλεῖς.
(5) *In Dominicam Paschae* (96, 841C).
(6) *I in Dorm.* 12 (96, 717C).

complishment of his words, just as he prophetically foretold. He most certainly points you out, through whom God, Who is above all, passed, and in taking flesh did not open the gate of your virginity. The seal truly remains eternally." (1) The burning bush which Moses saw is another figure of the Ever-Virgin. "We know that the bush of Moses prefigured that which was accomplished by extraordinary ordinances: for thus the Virgin who bore the (divine) Fire (2) was preserved when she bore our Benefactor, radiant with Light." (3)

d. Post partum.—Not only is Mary hailed as virgin in the conception and birth of Christ, but she remained until death the purest of virgins, the exemplar of purity for all future generations. For otherwise, how would she be the "Ever-Virgin"? How could she say to her divine Son when He came to take her chaste soul to Himself: "I have kept intact [the body] in which you were pleased to dwell and which you preserved virginal when you were born." (4)

Amongst the heretics who attacked the virginity *post partum* were the Antidicomarianites. *"Hi beatam Mariam semper virginem post editum Salvatorem cum Josepho congressam fuisse aiunt."* (5) The refutation does not follow immediately, but may be gathered from various other

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(1) *I Dorm.* 9 (96, 713B); cf. *I Nativ.* 4 (96, 665C); cf. Ezech. 44, 2.
(2) πυροφορούσα.
(3) Σελασφόρον. *In Theophaniam* (96, 832 B); also *In Festum Annun.* Carmen (96, 852D).
(4) *II Dorm.* 10 (96, 736C); cf. *Libellus Orthodoxiae* 10, *Damascenica*, p. [48].
(5) *De Haeresibus* 78 (94, 728A).

passages. In the first place, Jesus is always spoken of as the only Child of His Mother. "She conceived the First-born of the Father as her first and only-begotten." (1) Secondly, it is inconceivable that Mary, after having her virginity preserved by a unique miracle, should prove so ungrateful as to renounce this prerogative. "For how, having borne God, and being aware of the miracle by the experience of the things that followed, *viri complexum admisisset?* Begone! A chaste mind does not think or do such things." (2)

To those who base their objection against the perpetual virginity of Mary on the gospel of St. Matthew, (3) he answers: "The Ever-Virgin, therefore, remained a Virgin also after giving birth, *nulla ad obitum usque suum admissa cum viro consuetudine.* For if it is written: 'And he knew her not until she brought forth her first-born Son,' be it known that the first-born is the first one to be brought forth, even if he be the only-born,... and in no way implies the birth of others. The word 'until' signifies a limit of preceding time, but does not exclude what followed. For the Lord said; 'Behold, I am with you all days, until the consummation of the world,' (4) not that He will withdraw after the end of the world. For the holy apostle says: 'And so shall we be always with the Lord,' (5) that is, after the general resurrection. (6)

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(1) 3 *Dorm.* 2 (96, 756A).
(2) FO iv, 14 (94, 1161C).
(3) 1, 25.
(4) Matth. 28, 20.
(5) I Thess. 4, 16.
(6) FO iv, 14 (94, 1161B).

The espousals were never intended as a menace to Mary's virginal chastity; on the contrary, their sole reason was the safeguarding of the Virgin Mother. "Since the enemy of our salvation kept a close watch over virgins because of the prophecy of Isaias: (1) 'Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel' (which is interpreted, God with us) He who 'catches the wise in their craftiness', (2) in order to ensnare him who always prides himself in his wisdom,... gave the maiden to Joseph as spouse: the new Volume (3) to one versed in letters. This marriage became a protection for the Virgin, and a deception for him who kept [so close] a watch over virgins." (4)

Apropos of this "new Volume" [the Virgin Mary] in which the Holy Spirit was to write the Eternal Word, our author says in the homily on the Nativity, that God "gave it to a man knowing letters, but he did not read it. For Joseph did not know Mary, nor the force of the mystery," (5) that is, the Incarnation.

In the first homily on the Dormition, conformably to the account of the "Gospel of James" (6), he represents Joseph as chosen by the priests in his old age to be Mary's guardian. She was placed "in the hands of Joseph as a spouse, that is to say, as a guardian of her virginity." (7)

(1) 7, 14.
(2) Job, 5, 13.
(3) Cf. Is. 29, 1.
(4) FO iv, 14 (94, 1160A).
(5) *I Nativ.* 7 (96, 672A); cf. ibid. 6 (669D). Compare Isaias 29, 11.
2 *Dorm.* 17 (96, 745A).
(6) IX, 1 and 3.
(7) *I Dorm.* 6 (96, 709A).

Far superior to all other virgins, Mary is the virgin *par excellence*, the only virgin—solaque virgo—the model which so many virgins since her time have proposed to themselves. "Today the holy and only virgin is led to the supernal and heavenly temple. She cherished virginity so much that it became, in a way, a most pure fire in her. For every virgin blemishes her virginity by bearing a child; but she was a virgin before childbirth, and remained a virgin in childbirth as well as after childbirth." (1) Hence the sainted preacher tells her: "You are the most fruitful plant of virginity, for through you the virtue of virginity has become widespread." (2)

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(1) 2 *Dorm.* 2 (96, 724C).
(2) *I Nativ.* **11** (96, 680A).

CHAPTER IV

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

THE EIGHTH CENTURY TRADITION

In the consideration of the Divine Maternity and of the perpetual virginity of Mary, we have seen the Mariological doctrines which St. John Damascene treats *ex professo* in his systematic exposition of our holy faith. It would be entirely wrong however, to conclude that these two questions include all that the holy doctor believed about the Blessed Virgin. It is well known that the systematization of the Church's doctrine in the first centuries was brought about principally by the refutation of the false teachings of heretics. But the religious instruction of the faithful as represented by the homilies which have been preserved shows a far richer doctrinal content. (1)

(1) See F. VERCRUYSSEN: *De Marialeer van den H. Joannes Damascenus*. Handelingen van het Vlaamsch Maria-Congres. Brussel, 1921. Vol. I, p. 241. Since this excellent article is not easily had, it will be useful to reproduce the following lines here: "In de eerste eeuwen van het christendom, toen alle stift gescherpt werd tot de polemiek, moeten we echter geene diepe instudeering zoeken van al de mogelijke gevolgtrekkingen die uit een vaststaande waarheid voortvloeien. Buiten de strijdvragen des tijds hoeven we geene wetenschappelijke omlijning eener waarheid te verwachten. Maar het dagelijksch geloofsonderricht der catechesen en homiliën was veel rijker dan de reeds gesystematiseerde wetenschap; het levende geloof omvatte te allen tijde de niet bestreden punten, en uit die schatten moeten we leeren wat de H. Joannes Damascenus—en de Grieksche Kerk der VIII^{e} eeuw—aan Maria toekenden."

In the Damascene's homilies on the Nativity and on the Dormition, we find the fullest expression of his thoughts on Mary's initial sanctity—or, as we say to-day—on her Immaculate Conception. The feasts of the Conception of St. Anne (1) and the Conception of St. John the Baptist (2) were beginning to find a place in the Greek Church at the time when the Damascene composed his homilies, but the question of Mary's conception without the stain of original sin had not yet been formally raised. This does not, however, preclude the existence of a tradition in favor of such a doctrine in our author's writings—a tradition that is more than implicit, for this truth is repeated in many ways.

St. John Damascene's doctrine on the point under consideration differs little from that of St. Andrew of Crete (3) and of St. Germanus of Constantinople, (4) who are, with the monk of St. Sabas, the most conspicuous authors of Marian homilies in the eighth century; hence we may consider the Damascene's doctrine as typical of the faith of the Greek Church in that century. The extent and variety of his writings make it possible to consider the question from various viewpoints.

In order to form a clear idea of our author's doctrine concerning the Immaculate Conception, it will be neces-

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(1) Cf. H. KELLNER. *Heortologie*, 3d ed. Freiburg im Br., 1911, p. 181 ff.

(2) Cf. ibid. and KELLNER-BUND: *L'Année Écclésiastique*. Paris 1910, p. 294.

(3) See *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique: Immaculée Conception*, T. VII, col. 916.

(4) Ibid., col. 919.

sary to consider briefly his views on original sin. The latter point, in its turn, calls for an exposition of the Damascene's teaching on the primitive condition of man.

A. The Damascene's Doctrine on Original Sin

The Doctor of Damascus, ignorant of the scholastic distinctions in this matter, shows us the first man such as he came from the hands of God. Adam was innocent, upright, free from sorrow, free from all passion, possessed of all virtues and of all good things, immortal, and subject to God. (1) He was placed in a paradise which corresponded to his composite nature: for his body, there was the garden of delights; his soul dwelt in God as in its proper dwelling, (2) and conversed familiarly with the angels. (3)

Man was made to the "image and likeness" of God (4): "to His image, rational and free, and in His own likeness that is, perfect in virtue in so far as human nature can attain [perfection]." (5) Virtue is natural to man—St. John insists on this repeatedly: "Virtues are natural, and they exist naturally and equally in all, even if we do not all equally perform the acts of our nature. Through the transgression we have strayed from what is

(1) FO iii, 12 and 11 (94, 921A and 913B); *Hom. in Sab. Sanct.* 7 (96, 609A).
(2) FO ii, 11 (94, 916BC).
(3) Ibid. 30 (977A).
(4) Gen. i, 26.
(5) FO iv, 4 (94, 1108A).

according to nature to what is opposed to nature." (1)

But virtue is not man's greatest endowment, for when God created Adam, "He established him in the communion of His own grace." (2) By this precious gift, man was "placed in communion with [God] Himself," (3) in consequence of which, he "was deified (4) by his conversion to God: deified by a participation of the divine glory, not by a transformation into the divine essence." (5)

Man was created incorruptible, but his incorruptibility was directly dependent upon his fidelity to God: "[God] established man in communion with Himself,... and by this communion raised him to incorruption." (6) In virtue of this integrity, man was not subject to the ordinary needs of nature: eating, drinking, sleeping and suffering, nor subject to death. (7) As soon as our forefather withdrew his mind from the contemplation of God and turned it to the created things, the corruption of death was his. (8) God did not make death, but we brought it upon ourselves. "For every composite nature is destructible, but as long as Adam was united to God by contemplation, he had within himself a life which, in a supernatural manner, vivified his mortal nature." (9)

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(1) FO iii, 14 (94, 1045A); cf. ibid. ii, 12 and 30 (920B, 972A, 976A); *Hom. in Fic. Arefact.* 3 (96, 580C).

(2) ἐν κοινωνίᾳ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ καθίστησι χάριτος. *Hom. in Sab. Sanct.* 7 (96, 609A); *Hom. in Fic. Arefact.* 3 (96, 581A).

(3) FO ii, 30 (94, 976A); *I Nativ.* 8 (96, 673A).

(4) θεούμενον.

(5) FO ii, 12 (94, 924A).

(6) Ibid. iv, 4 (1108A).

(7) *Hom. in Sab. Sanct.* 27 (96, 628B); FO ii, 30 (94, 977CD).

(8) FO ii, 30 (94, 977C).

(9) *Dial. Contra Manich.* 71 (94, 1569C); FO ii, 11 and 28 (94,

In the trial which was to prove his worth, man failed; he transgressed the divine precept. (1) Hence, "he is deprived of grace, encompassed by corruption,... and condemned to sweat, labor, and death... Beginning its spread there, (2) sin enslaved me—thrice unhappy—and wrought all manner of evil in me,... and delivered me to death." (3) In these words, there is evidently a reference to a transmission of sin, but we cannot say with certainty whether the sin itself, or only its consequences have become our lot. That our author really taught a transmission of sin, the stain of nature which we call original sin, seems evident from passages in other works. (4) The Damascene says that the Eutychians rejected the assumption by the Word of a man, [that is, a human nature], "subject to the sin (5) of our forefather, Adam." (6) The Savior freed our nature (7) from the ancestral stain: "Through His birth;... through His baptism, passion, and resurrection, [Christ] freed our nature from the sin of our forefather, (8)

917D and 961B); *Hom. in Fic. Aref.* 3 (96, 581A). Cf. *Summa Theologica* I, q. 97, a. 1; *In II Sent.* d. 19, art. 2, corp.

(1) FO ii, 30 (94, 977B).

(2) Ἐντεῦθεν λαβοῦσα νομὴν ἡ ἁμαρτία.

(3) *Hom. in Sab. Sanct.* 10 (96, 609D); FO iii, 1 (94, 981A).

(4) J. TIXERONT says: "Toutefois, si saint Jean nous représente comme héritant de notre premier père, les misères de la vie, suite du péché, il ne parle pas d'une souillure morale proprement dite, qui nous serait transmise avec la vie." (*Histoire des Dogmes*. Paris, 1912, Vol. 3, p. 494). The following citations seem to show the contrary.

(5) τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ.

(6) *De Haeres. Liber*, 82 (94, 740A).

(7) τὴν φύσιν.

(8) τῆς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ προπάτορος.

from death (1) and corruption... (2) He gave us, as I said, a second birth, so that, as we were born of Adam, and made like to him, inheriting his malediction (3) and corruption, so born of [Christ], we are like to Him, inheriting His incorruption and benediction and glory." (4) Baptism destroys "the stain of the ancestral sin" (5) and sanctifies "the body and the soul." (6) This reference to the efficacy of baptism is particularly to the point, since the Damascene expressly teaches that the consequences of the original stain will remain with us until death.

A consideration of the foregoing texts will show that a distinction of grace and of preternatural gifts in the Damascene's doctrine on the original condition of man is not without foundation. God gave Adam not only being, (7) but also well-being, (8) which included grace, incorruption or integrity, and immortality. After the fall, God, because of His boundless mercy, did not forsake man laboring under the tyranny of sin, but willed to restore him to his primitive happiness. It was necessary that God Himself should save man, because the latter, "having by his own choice once enslaved himself to sin, and involved himself in earthly desires, was unable to convert himself." (9)

The will of man is the first subject of original sin. "If,

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(1) θανάτου.
(2) φθορᾶς.
(3) τὴν κατάραν.
(4) FO iv, 13 (94, 1137BC); cf. ibid. 11 (1129A).
(5) τὸν ῥύπον τῆς προγονικῆς ἁμαρτίας.
(6) *Libellus Orthodoxiae* 16, *Damascenica*, p. [50].
(7) τὸ εἶναι.
(8) τὸ εὖ εἶναι. *Hom. in Sab. Sanct.* 11 (96, 612A).
(9) *Hom. in Ficum Arefactam* 1 (96, 576D).

therefore, Adam willingly listened, and ate because he willed to do so, then what first became ill in us was the will." (1) In the treatise *De Duabus Voluntatibus*, St. John stresses the need of the assumption of the human will by Christ, in order that it might be freed from its inherited stain, and continuing his argument, he summarizes his whole belief in original sin and its consequences. "For what is it that fell and first became ill if not the mind (2) and its rational appetite, that is, the will? The latter, therefore, was in need of healing, for the will's disease is sin. If, then, [Christ] did not assume a rational and intellectual soul, and its will, He did not cure the malady of human nature. For this reason, therefore, He assumed the human will, but He did not assume sin, for sin is not His work. In order... to expel from the soul the disease of sin (3) which the enemy (4) had oversowed..., He assumed the soul and its will... He assumed the body also, in order to free it from corruption, (5) and from the servitude of sin. He also assumed the punishments (6) due to the first transgression, in order that, having paid our debt for us, He might free us from our condemnation. (7) A slave could not free a slave; wherefore [Christ], being free because He was sinless, and not subject to death or

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(1) FO iii, 14 (94, 1041D).
(2) νοῦς.
(3) νόσον τῆς ἁμαρτίας.
(4) See Matth. xiii, 25: the parable of the cockle sowed among the wheat.
(5) φθορᾶς.
(6) τιμωρίας.
(7) κατακρίσεως.

any other penalty, (1) took our punishments upon Himself for our sake, and died for us, in order to give 'to those who receive Him the power to be made the sons of God,' (2) and in the rebirth in the future life, to bestow incorruptibility upon them, as well as a life like that of the angels, free from trouble and labor. For we must bear the lot of the [first] Adam, from whom we are born, and thus attain to the gifts of the second Adam." (3) Note that what Jesus came to destroy was sin, a "disease of the will," a "malady of human nature", something which He Himself did not assume when He became man.

The fact that the Damascene, in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, restricts the meaning of "sinners" to "those who are subject to death because of sin," (4) must not be urged against the above citations, because he is here following St. John Chrysostom who has a less developed doctrine on original sin.

B. The Immaculate Conception

Now, in comparing the Damascene's doctrine on original sin with what he says about the Blessed Virgin, we shall find that he attributed to her the contrary of all that is implied in his concept of original sin : she is full of grace ; she is free from all concupiscence, and has her mind constantly fixed upon her Creator ; she submits to the

(1) ἐπιτιμίῳ.
(2) Cf. Joan. 1, 12.
(3) *De Duab. Volunt.* 44 (95, 184 ff).
(4) *In Rom.* v, 19 (95, 481A).

law of death only to resemble her Son in all things. Furthermore, our author never attributes the original stain to Mary. If he does not expressly exempt her from it, this exemption must be included in the absolute purity and freedom from sin in general which he considers necessary in one who is destined—and predestined [1]—to be the Mother of the God of infinite sanctity. [2]

Mary's predestination was precise, not general only. "Hail, predestined Mother of God. Hail! who wast chosen by the counsel of God before the ages." [3] From all eternity God foreknew her, and "loved" her as the future Mother of His only-begotten Son. [4] He promised her a life more excellent than her nature warranted. [5] Is it possible that the object of God's eternal predilection should have come into the world displeasing to Him?

Overlooking the immediate instruments of Mary's entrance into this world, the Damascene sees in the holy Virgin the Firmament which the Creator made—in which the Sun of Justice was to rise [6]; the Ladder constructed by the carpenter's Son [7]; the New Tome which the Word prepared for Himself [8]; and finally, the Temple built by the Prince of Peace. [9] Mary is to have a more excellent life than her nature warrants, because she will

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(1) See above, ch. II D.
(2) Cf. FO iv, 14 (94, 1160A).
(3) 3 *Dorm.* 5 (96, 761A).
(3) *I Nativ.* 7 (96, 672D).
(5) Ibid. 9 (96, 676A).
(6) Ibid. 3 (96, 664C).
(7) Ibid. (665A).
(8) Ibid. (672A).
(9) Ibid. 10 (677A).

have it for the sake of Him alone for whom she is to be born. (1) Again we must ask, can the Mother whom the Son of God prepared for Himself be stained with any impurity, be wanting essential prerequisites ?

We can supply the unqualified "No!" for our author, because Mary is "the most divine bud of the earth," (2) "the fruit of life," "the germ of justice", (3) which St. Anne, by the aid of divine grace, (4) was privileged to bear. Nature dared not anticipate the action of grace because the child was to be the Mother of God. If, then, the holy Virgin is a "germ of grace" (5) because nature waited until God solved Anne's sterility (6) in accord with His merciful designs, she is such especially because she was filled with grace at the very moment of her conception.

The presence of grace presupposes the absence of the original stain ; this freedom follows from the Damascene's views on generation. We have noted in a previous chapter (7) that he considered the seed of a man as the

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(1) *I Nativ.* 9 (676A).
(2) 3 *Dorm.* 5 (761A).
(3) γέννημα δικαιοσύνης. *I Nativ.* 9 (673C). See *Proto-gospel of James*, VI, 3 : καρπὸν δικαιοσύνης.
(4) *I Nativ.* 2 (664A).
(5) τὸ τῆς χάριτος βλάστημα.
(6) See above, p. 9. Dr E. B. PUSEY, *Eirenicon.* Part II. First Letter to the Rev. J.H. NEWMAN, D.D., in Explanation Chiefly in Regard to the Reverential Love Due to the Ever-Blessed Theotokos, etc. London, 1869, p. 322. No. 19. Dr. PUSEY rejects the passage under consideration as an argument in favor of the Immaculate Conception.—Considered in itself, apart from what the Damascene says immediately afterwards about the holiness of the conception, he is right, but seen in the light of the words that follow, the use of the word "grace" becomes significative.
(7) See Ch. II B, p. 46.

hypostasis to the blood of a woman. The seed is hypostasis in the same sense as the Word is the hypostasis to the human nature in Christ. (1) But if the seed thus considered, is stainless, the person must be perfectly pure, since "the body and the soul are formed at the same time." (2) This was the case in Mary's conception: *"O lumbos Joachim beatissimos, ex quibus mundissimum* (3) *semen jactum est: o admirabilem Annae uterum, in quo paulatim accrementis ex ea auctus atque formatus, natus est fetus sanctissimus.* (4) O womb, broader than the heavens' boundless expanse, in which the animated Firmament (5) has been conceived (6)!" Understood from our author's viewpoint, we have here an exact description of the Immaculate Conception. Mary's sanctity coincides with her conception in the womb, and her holiness is immediately beyond all measure, for it is by grace that the Blessed Virgin exceeds the expanse of the heavens. (7)

This is probably the most direct proof of the Damascene's faith in Mary's initial sanctity to be found in his

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(1) *II Adv. Nest.* 29, *Theol. Quartalschr.*, 1901, p. 573: *Exp. Fidei* viii, (95, 426C).

(2) FO ii, 12 (94, 921A).

(3) πανάμωμον.

(4) βρέφος πανάγιον.

(5) *I Nativ.* 2 (96, 664B): Ὦ ὀσφὺς τοῦ Ἰωακεὶμ παμμακάριστε, ἐξ ἧς κατεβλήθη σπέρμα πανάμωμον! Ὦ μήτρα τῆς Ἄννης ἀοίδιμε, ἐν ᾗ ταῖς κατὰ μικρὸν ἐξ αὐτῆς προσθήκαις ηὐξήθη, καὶ διαμορφοθὲν ἐτέχθη βρέφος πανάγιον!

(6) *I Nativ.* 2 (96, 664B) See ST. MODESTUS OF JERUSALEM, *Encom. in B. Virg.*, VIII, PG 86 bis 3296C: πρὸς τὴν ὑψηλοτέραν καὶ εὐρυχωροτέραν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

(7) *I Dorm.* 13 (96, 720B).

works. The fact that he knew that Jeremias was sanctified from (1) his mother's womb, and that John, the Baptist, was filled by the Holy Ghost before his birth, adds weight to the above argument, (2) although the Damascene nowhere compares their first sanctification with that of the holy Virgin. Since, however, the Damascene would have Mary second to none (3) in other respects, we may well suppose the same here.

A series of other considerations likewise point to the Damascene's belief in the Immaculate Conception. When the child first saw the light of day she was "above the angels"; (4) she was the Mountain of God surpassing "every height of men and angels"; she was "the divine Chariot ten-thousand times greater than they who abound in divine grace, that is, the cherubim and the seraphim"; she was a "Summit holier than Sina... which the illuminating power of the All-holy Spirit covered." (5) It is not surprising, then, that the preacher of the homily on the Nativity should marvel at the "miracles" [Note the plural!] which accompanied the Virgin's birth. (6) If the solution of Anne's sterility alone had been above the laws of nature, he could speak of only one "miracle."

It has been previously (7) noted that Mary was given to the earth as God's most precious gift, and that thus human nature was able to offer to its Creator a pleasing

(1) ἐκ.
(2) *II Adv. Nest.* 27 and 31, pp. 572 and 574.
(3) *I Dorm.* 6 (96, 708D); See above, ch. II D, p. 69.
(4) *I Nativ.* 6 (96, 669A).
(5) *I Nativ.* 6 (96, 669C); cf. Ps. 67, 16-18.
(6) Ibid. 2 (664AC).
(7) See Ch. II, D.

gift—a worthy mother. Anne's offspring was truly a "child of God" (1) "adorned with the grace of the Spirit", and for this reason, wholly near to God, (2) and worthy of being offered to her Creator. Mary is unique; she is a "child whose like was not [seen] before, nor will be [seen] again." (3)

If Satan had known the marvels of Joachim's child, he might have tried to harm her, but God forestalled him. "O most holy daughter of Joachim and Anne... who wast hidden from the fiery darts of evil, who hast dwelt in the bridal chamber of the Spirit, (4) and wast preserved without stain (5) to be the Spouse of God, and the true (6) Mother of God! O most holy daughter, seen on your mother's arms and formidable to the apostate powers!" (7) From what stain could an infant be preserved except the original; and what could make Satan fear her except the abundance of divine grace with which she was endowed?

Well might Gabriel proclaim her full of grace when he came to bring God's message to her. She surpassed

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(1) Θεόπαιδα. *I Dorm.* 7 (709A); See St. Sophronius of Jerusalem, *Anacreontica in Deip. Annun.*, 1, 7, PG. 87 (III), 3733A.

(2) *I Nativ.* 9, (676A and D).

(3) *I Dorm.* 5 (96, 708C). In a homily on the Annunciation, the authenticity of which is doubtful, we read the following: "Profecto gloriosa hæc et illustris inter mulieres, gratiam nacta est apud Deum, cum ab eo electa est, ut corpus ex ipsa sumeret compingeretque ex sancto ejusque sanguine; ut ei non fuerit in anterioribus puritate similis, nec futurus in posterioribus pari sanctitate præditus. (*Hom. in Annun. B.V.M.*, near the middle, PG 96, 645A).

(4) *I Nativ.* 9 and 3 (96, 676D and 665A).

(5) ἄμωμον.

(6) φύσει.

(7) *I Nativ.* 7 (96, 672B).

all in grace at her birth and whilst an infant, nor did she cease to be worthy of God's gifts. "Truly you have found grace who are worthy of grace... You found the abyss of grace, who kept safe the vessel of a twofold virginity, for you preserved your soul virginal no less than your body." (1) She was "the abyss of grace", "a sea of grace", (2) "a river full of the perfumes of the Spirit." (3) As the sun is the source of light, so Mary is an inexhaustible Source of divine grace. (4) This entire plenitude of grace, not only presumable, but expressly attributed to Mary from her very conception, excludes the possibility of an original stain.

In the above paragraph, there was question of a twofold virginity : that of the body and that of the soul, the former being consequent upon the latter, as the preacher himself remarks. (5) Furthermore, Mary is the only virgin who always cherished virginity in mind, and in soul, and in body. (6) She is indeed the "immaculate Virgin," (7) "the holy and all-blameless maiden," (8) "the all-pure Spouse." (9) What is this virginity of the soul ? It is nothing less than an entire purity, the freedom from every stain of sin. It is another way of expressing the absolute purity which was a necessary prerequisite

(1) *I Dorm.* 7 (96, 709B).
(2) 2 *Dorm.* 2 (96, 745A).
(3) 3 *Dorm.* 5 (761A).
(4) *I Dorm.* 10 (96, 716BC) ; see pp. 153-155.
(5) See above, Ch. III, a.
(6) See Ch. III, a, p. 82.
(7) 2 *Dorm.* 2 (96, 725B) ; *Canon in Dorm.* VIII (96, 1365C).
(8) 1 *Dorm.* 6 (96, 709A).
(9) *Canon in Dorm.* III (96, 1364A).

of the Divine Maternity, and which, in its utmost perfection implies the Immaculate Conception.

Mary is the "Virgin Earth" from which the New Adam was made. (1) The body of Jesus was formed from the "holy and immaculate flesh and blood" of the holy Virgin; (2) He entered into the womb of her who was "chaste and free from every stain in body, in soul, and in thought." (3) Anne's child is a "lily among the thorns,... a rose which grew up among the thorns, [that is], the Jews, and which fills all things with its good odor." (4) At her death, Jesus came to receive the "pure and innocent soul", (5) the "holy, pure, and stainless soul" which He "had preserved from every fault." (6) "More brilliant than the sun by the beauty of her virginity," (7) Mary is "truly pure and surpassing all after God" (8)—in purity, as appears from the context. She is, therefore, purer than the angels, above whom the Damascene never hesitates to place her, even at the moment of her birth. Well then did he apply to "the all-holy, undefiled, and Ever-Virgin Mary", (9) the words of the Canticle of Canticles:

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(1) 2 *Dorm.* 2 (96, 725A).
(2) FO iv, 14 (94, 1160C); Ibid. iii, 1 (985B); 1 *Dorm.* 3 (96, 704A); 1 *Adv. Nest.* 43 (95, 224A); *Libellus Orthodoxiae* 10, *Damascenica*, p. [48].
(3) *Libellus Orthodoxiae* 7, *Damascenica*, p. [48].
(4) *I Nativ.* 6 (96, 669AB).
(5) 2 *Dorm.* 2 (96, 724D).
(6) 2 *Dorm.* 10 (96, 736C).
(7) 3 *Dorm.* 4 (96, 760B).
(8) 2 *Dorm.* 16 (744C). Compare ST. SOPHRONIUS, *In SS. Deiparae Annun.* 18, PG 87, 3237D: πάσης πλέον τῆς κτίσεως καθαρότητι λάμπουσα
(9) *Libellus Orthodoxiae* 10, *Damascenica*, p. [48].

"Thou art [all] fair, O my love, and there is no spot in Thee." (1)

As the child, Mary, grew up, we do not see in her a nature "prone to evil from its youth", (2) but rather a marvelous growth in virtue and union with God. According to the Damascene, virtue was natural to man in his primitive condition, and his soul dwelt in a constant communion with God. Mary's freedom from concupiscence, therefore, is indicative of her freedom from the original stain. The following description of the holy Virgin's sojourn in the temple is perhaps the most conspicuous testimony of *De Fide Orthodoxa* on our present subject: "And then, transplanted into the temple of God and enriched by the Spirit like a fruitful olive, (3) [Mary] became the abode of every virtue. She banished all worldly and carnal desires from her mind, and thus preserved her soul, as well as her body, virginal, as was befitting her who was to conceive God in her womb... Thus, therefore, she sought sanctity, and became a holy and admirable temple, worthy of the Most High God." (4) She was not tempted to pride because of God's gifts to her, but "her spirit was humble in the midst of the highest contemplations." (5) And just as Adam was incorruptible whilst his soul dwelt with its Creator, so also death feared her who was "wholly united to God." (6)

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(1) Cant. Cant. iv, 7; 3 *Dorm.* 10 (96, 736D).
(2) Cf. Gen. viii, 21.
(3) Cf. Ps. 51, 10.
(4) FO iv, 14 (94, 1160A).
(5) *I Nativ.* 11 (96, 680A).
(6) 2 *Dorm.* 3 (96, 728B).

The picture of this life free from the disorder consequent upon our forefather's disobedience, is painted in the most vivid colors in the homily on the Nativity. The reader will notice how the devout preacher always thinks of the holy Virgin in terms of the Divine Maternity, and consequently seems, at times, to lose sight of the child whose praises he is singing, in order to contemplate the Virgin Mother. "You will offer to God, the King of the universe, this child embellished with the beauty of virtues as with golden fringes, and adorned with the grace of the Spirit... O divine and animate Image by which the Creator God was delighted! Your mind is divinely ruled and bent on God alone. Your every desire tends toward Him who alone is desirable and worthy of love. You are angry only with sin and with the author of sin. You will have a life more excellent than your nature warrants..... Your [rational] appetite is nourished by divine words by which you prosper like a fruitful olive in the house of God, like a tree planted on the banks of the waters of the Spirit, (1) like the tree of life which gave its fruit in the predestined time: God Incarnate, the eternal Life of all. You fostered all useful thoughts profitable to the soul, and rejected superfluous and harmful thoughts before tasting them. Your eyes were always fixed on the Lord, seeing the perennial and unapproachable Light. Your ears listened to the Divine Word, cheered by the lyre of the Spirit—ears through which the Word entered in order to be made flesh. Your nostrils are en-

(1) Cf. Ps. 1, 3.

chanted by the odor of the ointments of the Spouse... Your lips praise the Lord, and adhere to His lips. Your mouth and throat utter (1) the words of God, and are filled with divine sweetness. Your pure and unstained heart sees and desires the all-pure God... Your feet are led by the law of God as by a lighted lamp, and follow Him without looking back until they draw the beloved to the lover. You are wholly the Bridal Chamber of the Spirit, wholly the City of the living God which the waves of the river gladden—the waves of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. You are all fair, wholly near to God." (2) In the above passages, both the conformity of Mary's will with her Maker's and her opposition to all that is not holy are stressed. Similar expressions may be culled from other sources.

Born "the adversary of our ancestral fornication", (3) "the immaculate Virgin held no intercourse with worldly passions, but was nourished with celestial thoughts." (4) This was the condition of Adam in his innocence. His fall was the withdrawal of his mind from the divine object of its contemplation, and its conversion to the things of earth. (5) Contrary to the example of her ancestors, Mary "repelled the attack of every vice." (6)

Not only was Mary free from all sinful concupiscence, but her conception of Jesus was not accompanied by any

(1) διαχρίνουσαι.
(2) 1 *Nativ.* 9 (96, 673D and 676).
(3) Ibid. 8 (96, 673B).
(4) 2 *Dorm.* 2 (725B).
(5) FO ii, 30 (94, 977C); *Hom. in Fic. Aref.* 3 (96, 582B).
(6) 2 *Dorm.* 3 (728A).

sensual pleasure, and His birth was without pain. (1) Like her childbearing, Mary's death was free from all suffering. (2) This perfect harmony of Mary's faculties and complete exemption from all the disorders consequent upon original sin presupposes the Immaculate Conception.

Among all the penalties of Adam's disobedience, death is the most conspicuous. As all men are conceived in sin, so, like their common ancestor, they are all destined to return to the earth whence they were taken. If anyone should be born free from this stain, he would not incur its penalty. In *De Fide Orthodoxa*, the Damascene lays down the principle: "It was fitting that He who was to redeem us should be sinless, and not subject to death because of sin." (3) In a later chapter he draws the conclusion: "Since our Lord Jesus Christ was sinless,... He was not subject to death, if indeed, death came into the world through sin." (4)

In the Homilies on the Dormition, Mary is represented as not subject to this universal law of death, but freely submitting to it in order to resemble her divine Son more fully. In the first homily the preacher says: "O how does she who in childbirth superseded the laws of nature, now yield to these laws, and how is her undefiled body subjected to death? For it is fitting that, having put off corruption, she be invested with incorruption, since

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(7) See above, ch. II, B.
(8) 2 *Dorm.* 3 (728C).
(1) FO iii, 1 (94, 982BC).
(2) Ibid. iii, 27 (1096B); *Hom. in Sab. Sanct.* 20 (96, 617B); *Laud. S. Barb.* 4 (96, 787A); *De Duab. Vol.* 44 (95, 185A).

the Lord of nature did not refuse to experience death." (1) Even Adam and Eve express their surprise that the daughter who repaired their error should be subjected to the common penalty: "How should you taste death, O undefiled (2) one?" Placed on the lips of the authors of our ruin, the question has a special significance, and the epithet "undefiled", may well be the equivalent of our "Immaculate".

Mary's death, then, whilst resembling that of sinful men in its essence, does not bear the humiliation of a punishment. It was "glorious and truly holy and worthy of all praise." Well might she sing with the risen Saviour: "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" (3) For, "'the death of the wicked is very evil,' (4) but in her in whom the sting of death, that is, sin, has been extinguished—what shall we say? It is the beginning of a better and unending life." (5) Mary's freedom from sin and her constant union with God, of which there was question above, are the intrinsic reasons why she was not subject to death in the same sense in which we are. Having learned a lesson from its contact with the Innocent One *par excellence*, Death feared to approach the holy Virgin. (6) These considerations confirm the conclusion that the Damascene must have

(1) 1 *Dorm.* 10 (96, 713D); Cf. I Cor. 15, 55.
(2) ἄχραντος.
(3) I Cor. 15, 55.
(4) Ps. 33, 22.
(5) 2 *Dorm.* 3 (96, 728C). Father JANSSENS sees a clear reference to the Immaculate Conception in the foregoing words. *De Heilige Maagd*, p. 200, note 1.
(6) 2 *Dorm.* 3 (96, 728C).

considered the Mother of God free from Adam's sin.

In the exposition of original sin with which this chapter began, it was noted that Adam, having enslaved himself to sin, could not raise himself. The Redeemer could raise our fallen nature, because He was free from sin. Now, in the contrasts between Eve and Mary (1) which reappear frequently in the Damascene's Marian homilies, the holy preacher says that the Blessed Virgin repaired Eve's disobedience, (2) paid her debt to the Creator, (3) and ameliorated the condition of the whole human race. She could do these things only on the condition of her freedom from the original stain which enslaves us all, for "a slave cannot free a slave."

Besides, it is hardly probable that St. John could have considered her stained with the slightest sin who is "the choicest glory of humanity", "the ornament of the human race, and the boast of all creation." (4) The cumulative force of all the preceding considerations points to one conclusion: the holy Mother of God was immaculate in her conception.

C. Objections

Before drawing a final conclusion from the foregoing considerations, it will be necessary to explain several texts that seem to militate against Mary's initial sanctity.

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(1) See Ch. VII.

(2) See especially 1 *Nativ.* 1 and 7 (96, 661BC and 672B); 2 *Dorm.* 2 and 8 (725A and 735BC); 3 *Dorm.* 2 (756A).

(3) FO iv, 14 (94, 1160C).

(4) See above, Ch. II, D.

These are of two kinds: first, those which proclaim that our Lord alone was free from all sin; and secondly, those which attribute a purification to Mary before the conception of Jesus.

A certain number of the Fathers of the preceding centuries proclaimed Christ alone free from all sin. Some of them even went further, directly attributing minor faults to the Mother of Jesus. (1) Whilst repeating the former statement, St. John Damascene never attributed a positive sin to the all-pure Virgin. In the *Homilia in Sabbatum Sanctum* we read: "God, the Word, who created us, for our sake took upon Himself all that we are, experienced our passions like unto us, without sin, (2) fulfilled the law, and appeared among men alone without sin, and for this reason, not subject to death." (3) Likewise one of the titles of the *Sacra Parallela* is thus conceived: "On sinlessness: No one is sinless except God." (4) The difficulty is evident: if the God-Man "alone" was without sin, Mary is not the "immaculate" Virgin in the fullest sense of the word. But this does not seem to be true meaning of these passages, as appears from a comparison with other texts.

Sinlessness may be considered from the viewpoint of

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(1) See especially CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: *Paedagog.* III, 12 (8, 672) (μόνος γὰρ ἀναμάρτητος αὐτὸς ὁ Λόγος). For an indication of the Fathers who said that Christ alone was sinless, as well as for the sins attributed to Mary, and a solution of the difficulty, see *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique: Immaculée Conception*, T. VII, col. 886 (LE BACHELET); and F. J. FRIEDEL, S.M., *The Mariology of Cardinal Newman*, New York, 1928, pp. 278-287.

(2) Hebr. iv, 15.

(3) μόνος... ἀναμάρτητος. No. 20 (96, 617B).

(4) Littera A, Tit. xiii (95, 1172A).

fact, or from the viewpoint of right and nature. (1) The latter implies essential impeccability, and must be reserved to God alone. Now, as regards the above passages, the first expressly mentions the Word of God, the Creator; and in the second the word "God" is not qualified. The Damascene's thought is more clearly and completely expressed in *De Fide Orthodoxa*. Treating of the primitive condition of man, he says: "God made man sinless by nature, (2) and possessed of free will. I say sinless, not that he cannot sin, for God alone is incapable of sinning, (3) but as having sin in his free choice, rather than in his nature," (4) that is, he had the power to persevere and progress in good by the help of divine grace, as well as, God permitting, to turn away from virtue, and to fall into vice, by his own free will.

In the citations which attribute sinlessness to God alone, there is evidently question of the "incapability of sinning" referred to in the preceding citation. In saying that man is "sinless in nature", our author wishes only to reject sin as a constituent element of human nature. Thus, in the *Expositio Fidei*, he says that our Lord "was made a perfect man, without sin, because sin does not belong to the constitution of man." (5)

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(1) The distinction is made by LE BACHELET (cited above). See also F. VERCRUYSSEN, *op. cit.*, T. 1, p. 243. This author also notes that the passages in question must be understood "van natuurswege".

(2) φύσει ἀναμάρτητον.

(3) ἁμαρτίας ἐστὶν ἀνεπίδεκτον.

(4) FO ii, 12 (94, 924A).

(5) No. VIII (95, 426C); 1 *Dorm.* 3 (96, 704C).

As regards the sinlessness in fact or freedom from personal sin, we have seen above that the Damascene considers the holy Virgin free from every shadow of sin, and stresses her purity from the first moment of her existence. Furthermore, he exempts her from the universal law of death and corruption, an exemption which presupposes freedom from original sin. The essential sinlessness of God, therefore, is unique, but it does not preclude the sinlessness by grace which is Mary's unique privilege, and which makes her the "only virgin"—solaque virgo. (1)

The second objection against the initial sanctity of the Blessed Virgin is her purification on the day of the Annunciation. Its mention appears six times in the Damascene's writings: three times in works of undoubted authenticity; twice in the polemic writings against the Saracens which are probably based on the oral teaching of the holy Doctor, and once in the hymn for the feast of the Annunciation. In *De Fide Orthodoxa*, having narrated the interview between Mary and the archangel Gabriel, our author continues: "After the consent of the holy Virgin, the Holy Ghost came upon her,... purified her, (2) and gave her the power to receive the divinity of the Word, together with the generative power." (3) The expression is slightly changed in the first homily on the Assumption: "The sanctifying power of the Spirit came

(1) See Ch. III.
(2) καθαίρον αὐτήν.
(3) FO iii, 2 (94, 985B). With the exception of the last phrase this passage is repeated in *I Adv. Nest.* 43 (95, 221D).

upon her, purified and sanctified her, and as it were, forebedewed her." (1) In the dialogues between a Christian and a Saracen, the word "purified" is quoted as being contained in the Sacred book of the Saracens. "And if he [the Saracen] should say: How did God descend into the womb of a woman? Answer him: Let us use your scripture (2) and my Scripture. Your scripture says that God purified (3) the Virgin Mary above the flesh of all women, and the Spirit of God and the Word descended into her. My Gospel says: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.' (4) You see, there is the same form of expression in both, and the same meaning." (5) And finally, in the hymn on the Annunciation, Mary answers the angel: "Since, therefore, my soul has been purified (6) by the Spirit, be it done unto me according to thy word." (7) The four passages here cited are substantially the same. The reason why the Damascene speaks of a preliminary

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(1) *I Dorm.* 3 (96, 704A). Ἡ δὲ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἁγιαστικὴ δύναμις ἐπεφοίτησεν, ἐκάθαρέ τε καὶ ἡγίασε, καὶ οἱονεὶ προήρδευσε.

M. JUGIE, probably because of the passage in *De Fide Orthodoxa*, translates the last word: "la rendit féconde". But, since the Word Himself is the divine seed which made the holy Virgin fruitful, it is possible that the word refers to the "waves of the grace of the Spirit" [*I Nativ.* 9 (96, 676D)] which watered the Tree "planted on the banks of the waters of the Spirit." (Ibid.)

(2) γραφῇ.

(3) ἐκάθηρεν.

(4) Luc. 1, 35.

(5) *Disp. Sarac. et Christ.*, ca. finem (96, 1344C); the same on *Disceptatio Christ. et Saraceni* 3 (94, 1588D).

(6) συγκαθήγνισμαι.

(7) *In Festum Annun. B. Dei Genitricis Carmen*, (96, 852C).

purification is not, however, the Saracen testimony, (1) but rather that of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, (2) of St. Gregory of Nazianzum, and of St. Sophronius of Jerusalem. In his homily *In Theophania*, the patriarch of Constantinople says: The Word "became a perfect man, without sin; He was conceived by the Virgin, whose body and soul had previously been purified by the Spirit, (3) for it was fitting to honor the childbearing and [at the same time] show a preference for virginity." Le Bachelet (4) solves the difficulty thus: "Gregory is speaking of a relative purification; in view of the virginal conception of Jesus Christ—a purification which should elevate the Virgin Mary to the degree of holiness and purity necessary 'that the Son of God might be born in a mysterious way, free from all stain.' (5) To wish, in this instance, to take the term *καθαίρειν* in its absolute meaning, as signifying a passage from positive impurity to simple purity, would

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(1) See VASSALL-PHILLIPS, C.SS.R., *op. cit.*, p. 40. Treating of the Immaculate Conception, he says that we find an echo of this tradition even in the Koran. Mr. RODWELL writes: "According to a tradition of Mohammed every new-born child is touched by Satan, with the exception of Mary and her Son, between whom and Satan, God 'interposed a veil'. These words of the Koran, therefore, with verse 37 of the same Sura [iii]: 'O Mary, verily God hath chosen thee above the women of the world,' seem to show that Mohammed had received the Christian Tradition of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin." Quoted from the Koran (Everyman's Library Edition).

(2) ST. CYRIL OF JERUSAEM: Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελθὸν ἐπ' αὐτὴν, ἡγίαζεν αὐτὴν πρὸς τὸ δυνηθῆναι δέξασθαι τὸν δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο. (*Catech.* xviii, PG 33, 976A).

(3) κυηθεὶς μὲν ἐκ τῆς παρθένου καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ σάρκα προκαθαρθείσης τῷ Πνεύματι. *Orat.* 38, *In Theophania* 13, (PG 36, 325B).

(4) *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique:* Loc. cit. supra, Col. 891.

(5) *Orat.* 40, *In Sanct. Bapt.* 45, (36, 423).

be to disregard the Scriptural and patristic use of the word in a wider sense, to signify the passage from a lower to a higher degree of positive purity; the theory of the purification of the angels may be recalled here." (1) This explanation, as will soon be seen, is fully applicable to the Damascene.

Like St. Gregory, St. Sophronius, (2) with whose writings the Damascene was no doubt acquainted, speaks of a preliminary purification in a manner which excludes the thought of a cleansing from sin. Thus, for example, in a sermon on the Annunciation: "The Holy Ghost will come upon you, the Immaculate One, to make you purer, (3) and to give you the power which renders fruitful." How could the Holy Spirit have freed the "Immaculate One" from sin? In another passage of the same sermon, in the midst of the highest praises of the fullness of Mary's grace, the holy patriarch says: "No one has been as fully sanctified as you; (4) no one was exalted like you; no one was purified in advance like you." (5) Placed in the midst of the highest praises the *προκεκάθαρται*, preceded as it is by the thought of Mary's superabundant sanctification, would almost seem to anticipate the definition of Pope Pius IX. (6)

(1) *De Caelest. Hier.* x, 1; *De Eccles. hierarch.* vi, 6 (PG. III, 272, 537).

(2) See: *St. Sophrone et L'Immaculée Conception*, by M. JUGIE, in the *Revue Augustinéenne*, t. 16, 1910, pp. 567-574. Also, *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique: Immaculée Conception*, T. VII, col. 915.

(3) τὴν ἀμόλυντον... καθαρωτέραν. *Orat. in S. Deip. Annun.* 43 (PG 87, iii, 3273D).

(4) καθηγίασται.

(5) προκεκάθαρται. *Orat. in S. Deip. Annun.* 45, PG 87, iii, 3248A.

(6) Let us add the following words of St. Sophronius which recall

Basing himself on these Fathers, the Damascene could hardly have intended to express the cleansing of the holy Virgin from original sin on the day of the Annunciation, as some Greek Orthodox and Russian theologians have claimed. (1) No one who has read the exposition of the Damascene's doctrine on Mary's original sanctity exposed in the preceding pages can fail to see the utter incompatibility of such a statement with the views of our author. How could the child who was all holy in her mother's womb, who surpassed the cherubim and seraphim in grace, whose mind was wholly united to God, still have needed purification from the original stain when Gabriel came to bring God's message to her ? A soul deprived of grace cannot be pleasing to the Creator, but Mary was most dear to Him from the beginning. Like the sun, she is the source of true Light, from which rivers of grace are constantly flowing. How could this Source have been tainted ? (2)

Not only is there no reference to original sin in the purification of which St. John speaks, but there is no question of any sin whatever. Mary rejected all that is evil before she tasted it. Since the negative meaning of purification is incompatible with the Damascene's doc-

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St. Gregory of Nazianzum : "For this reason the holy Virgin is chosen and sanctified in body and soul, and thus she participates in the Incarnation as pure (καθαρὰ) and holy and immaculate. (*Epist. Synodica ad Sergium.* (PG 87, iii, 3161B).

(1) According to M. JUGIE : *St. Jean Damascène et l'Immaculée Conception, Bessarione,* 1923, p. 1. See the same author in *D.T.C. : Immaculée Conception,* t. VII, col. 920 ; and LE BACHELET in the same article, c. 891.

(2) 1 *Dorm.* 10 (96, 716B).

trine, we must consider it in a positive way, as in the case of St. Gregory of Nazianzum. Thus understood, the purification is nothing else than an augmentation of grace and a strengthening before the conception of our Lord. The need of such a strengthening has been previously noted: "The All-holy Spirit by the dew of His divinity kept you unharmed by the divine Fire," (1) "for from you the Flame of divinity—the Term and Word of the Father—burst forth." (2)

It is thus that Father M. Jugie, an outstanding authority on the theology of the Greek Church, understands the purification in question. In the article on the Immaculate Conception previously referred to, he says: "There is question of an augmentation of holiness, and perhaps even of an increase of corporal purity, which the descent of the Holy Ghost brought to Mary in view of preparing her immediately for the Divine Maternity... The Byzantines, before as well as after the doctor of Damascus, have explicitly declared that the purification on the day of the Annunciation must be understood of an augmentation of holiness." (3)

It is in this sense, also, that the Angelic Doctor interprets the passage of *De Fide Orthodoxa*. He states the objection as follows: "The Damascene says that 'the Holy Ghost came upon the Blessed Virgin, purifying her before the conception of the Son of God,' which can be understood only of the cleansing from the germ of concupiscence

(1) 1 *Nativ.* 10 (96, 677B).
(2) 1 *Dorm.* 8 (96, 712C).
(3) *Bessarione*, 1923, p. 6.

(*a fomite*), because, as Augustine says, she committed no sin. Therefore by her sanctification in the womb, she was not entirely cleansed from the germ of concupiscence." Rejecting this interpretation of our author's words, he replies: "The Holy Ghost wrought a twofold purification in the Blessed Virgin: the first, indeed, as a preparation for the conception of Christ. This cleansing was not from any impurity of sin or concupiscence, but a concentration of her faculties into a greater unity, and an elevation above the multitude." (1) It is of this preparatory purification alone that the Damascene speaks, (2) nor does he make any allusion to the second, which according to St. Thomas, was wrought by the conception of Christ, and entirely freed Mary from the *fomes peccati*. (3)

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(1) "...non fuit ab aliqua impuritate culpæ vel fomitis, sed mentem ejus magis in unum colligens, et a multitudine sustollens." *Summa Theologica:* III, q. 27, art. 3, ad 3.

(2) Note that St. Thomas himself cites the Damascene as follows: "...purgans eam *ante* conceptionem." That the Angelic Doctor rightly interprets our author's view appears from the latter's use of the word "then": "After the holy Virgin's consent, the Holy Ghost came upon her,...purified her,...And then (καὶ τότε) the Son of God overshadowed her." The word "then" is found every time there is question of the purification, showing that it is purely preliminary, and not a purification "*mediante conceptione*". In the hymn on the Annunciation, the cleansing precedes the consent. The conception confirmed Mary in grace. (See Ch. V, below).

(3) "Aliam purgationem...mediante conceptione." Since St. Thomas is here directly treating the question of Mary's sanctification, this response may be considered as immediately touching our question. It is necessary, however, to note his explanation of the Damascene's words in two other places:

1. *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 32, art. 4, ad 1: "Spiritus Sanctus supervenit Virgini purgans ipsam, id est præservans, ne cum peccato originali conciperet."

2. *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 81, art. 5, ad 3: "Illa purgatio præveniens in beata Virgine non requirebatur ad auferendam transfusionem

It may be possible to indicate a basis for the foregoing explanations in the Damascene's own works. Christ "commanded us to be reborn through water and the Spirit—the Spirit having come upon the water by prayer and invocation. For, since man is twofold, consisting of a body and of a soul, He gave us a twofold purification, (1) through water and the Spirit: the Spirit restores the image and likeness [of God] in us; the water cleanses the body from sin through the grace of the spirit, and frees us from corruption. The purification through the water expresses the image of death; that of the Spirit gives a pledge of life." (2) Whilst assigning the water's efficacy to the grace of the Holy Ghost, our author seems rather to attribute a positive role to the purification through the Spirit. The restoration of the "image and likeness" of God, according to his doctrine, is the perfecting of the soul in virtue. Further on, in the same chapter of *De Fide Orthodoxa* we find the following: "The forgiveness of sins, therefore, is given to all alike through baptism; but the grace of the Spirit, in proportion to the faith and the previous cleansing." (3) Here again, baptism supplies the negative condition for the reception of grace; faith is a positive condition; may not the προκάθαρσις, or purification, be considered as such also?

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originalis peccati; sed quia opportebat ut Mater Dei maxima puritate niteret; non enim est aliquid digne receptaculum Dei nisi sit mundum, secundum illud Ps. xcii, 5: 'Domum tuam, Domine, decet sanctitudo!'"

(1) κάθαρσιν.

(2) FO iv, 9 (94, 1121A).

(3) προκαθάρσεως. Ibid. C.

More immediately to the point is the very text of the last cited passage in which there is question of a purification. Concluding her dialogue with Gabriel Mary says: "Since, therefore, my soul has been purified by the Spirit, be it done to me according to thy word." (1) The mere cleansing from sin would not have rendered Mary fit to become the Mother of God. She needed a positive preparation of the highest order, and this is precisely what the verb used in the above text implies. The verb *συγκαθήγνισμαι*(2) connotes a great increase of the quality of purity, a thorough sanctification, and in no way includes the idea of a cleansing. This passage of the hymn on the Annunciation, therefore, is really an argument in favor of the positive interpretation of the other texts.

Because of the Damascene's insistence on the purification in his scientific works, Father Vercruyssen (3) thinks that the Holy Doctor refers to the cleansing from the "fomus concupiscentiæ," which though bound, exist-

(1) *Carnem in festum Annuntiationis* (96, 852C).

(2) From ἁγνίζω; ἁγνός: purify; pure, chaste, holy, sacred.

(3) *Op. cit.*, p. 244: "Maria is dus vrij gebleven van de erfzonde, vrij van alle persoonlijke zonde, vrij zelfs van alle ongeregelde begeerlijkheid, en nog is daarmede aan Joannes' hoogen dunk van het goddelijk Moederschap niet voldaan: nog zal op het oogenblik der Menschwording, als bekroning en bevestiging van zoovele voorbereidende voorrechten, Maria vollediger zuiverheid verwerven: Spiritus Sanctus.....Maar nu de teksten bij herhaling en de wetenschappelijke werken voorkomen lijkt zulke verklaring onvoldoende. We moeten dus aannemen dat in Maria, ondanks de vrijwaring van de erfzonde, toch tot op het oogenblik der Menschwording de "fomes concupiscentiæ" was blijven voortbestaan, al was die dan ook beteugeld en bevrijd tegen alle ongeregelheid." The author admits the possibility of the existence of a "fomes peccati", or concupiscence, even in the supposition of an Immaculate Conception, a position which we do not accept.

ed until the moment of the Incarnation. There is no basis for this supposition save the use of the word *καθαίρειν* in the works of the Damascene. This point has been sufficiently treated in the preceding paragraphs. Besides, the role of the Holy Ghost is in no way destroyed (1) by denying a real purification, since the elevation in grace, which we understand, is more properly a work of the Holy Spirit than the cleansing from sin.

Finally, considering the ensemble of St. John Damascene's teachings on Mary's initial sanctity, we find a very pronounced and explicit traditional testimony in favor of the Immaculate Conception. The holy Doctor's peculiar views on generation advance Mary's sanctity to the very moment of the active conception. He considers her full of grace, all pure, and free from concupiscence from the beginning. The union of the holy Virgin's mind with God recalls the state of original justice; her cooperation in our restoration demands that she be free, and not a slave of sin; and her voluntary and free submission to the law of death presupposes the absence of the universal condemnation. We may conclude, therefore, that if St. John Damascene did not teach the Immaculate Conception *ex professo* because the question had not yet been expressly raised, nevertheless, his whole doctrine on the sanctity of Mary and on her origin points to, and presupposes this privilege so dear to her Immaculate Heart.

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(1) VERCRUYSSEN, *loc. cit.*, note 12.

CHAPTER V

HOLINESS OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

In the two preceding chapters we have considered Mary's original sanctity and her virginity. We have not, however, directly treated the holiness of the life of the Mother of God. The present chapter will be devoted to the study of this question.

Negatively considered, sanctity implies the absence of sin; positively, on our part, the practice of virtue; on God's part, the adornment of our souls with grace. This chapter, therefore, will naturally be divided into three sections.

A. Mary's Sinlessness

Mary was free from actual sin, even from the slightest imperfections. That this is the teaching of the Doctor of Damascus, appears from the fact that he never alludes to any reprehensible conduct in her whom he looks upon as all pure—as a virgin in mind, in heart and in body. Furthermore, he frequently refers to her hatred of sin, and interprets in its true sense a scriptural passage in which a number of his predecessors discerned an allusion to a doubt on Mary's part during the Passion.

Whilst treating of the Immaculate Conception, we saw that Mary was born "an adversary of our ancestral fornication" (1); that she was "hidden to the fiery darts of evil" (2); that she "banished all worldly and carnal desires" (3) whilst she dwelt in God's temple; that she "was angry only with sin and with its author" (4); that she "rejected all superfluous and harmful thoughts before tasting them" (5); for "in her the sting of death, that is, sin, has been extinguished. "(6) Most of these words are found in the homily on the Nativity. They are reechoed in the homilies on the Dormition.

St. John tells us that, when Jesus came to take his Mother's soul to Himself, she said to him: "Receive my soul which is so dear to you, and which you have preserved without fault." (7) At Mary's death, "the most holy dove, the innocent and guileless soul [which was] consecrated to the divine Spirit, flew out of the ark", that is, out of its earthly habitation. (8) Entirely pure, Mary's soul immediately entered heaven: "Today the spotless Virgin who did not harbor earthly affections, but was nourished by heavenly thoughts did not return to earth, but as she is truly the animated Heaven, she takes up her abode in the heavenly tabernacles." (9) Paradise

(1) *I Nativ.* 8 (96, 673B).
(2) Ibid. 7 (672B).
(3) FO iv, 14 (94, 1160A).
(4) *I Nativ.* 9 (676A).
(5) Ibid. B.
(6) 2 *Dorm.* 3 (96, 728C).
(7) Ibid. 10 (736C).
(8) 2 *Dorm.* 2 (96, 724D).
(9) Ibid. (725B).

could not refuse to admit her "who repelled the attack of every vice." (1) Evidently the very shadow of sin is excluded by these expressions.

From the above texts, two reasons for Mary's sinlessness may be deduced: first, she was so closely united to God that sin could not find an entrance into her soul; and secondly, she repelled every external suggestion of evil from the beginning. Besides these, a third reason and by far not the least important, is the intervention of the Holy Spirit. He showered His graces upon her from the first instant of her existence, and preserved her in His bridal chamber that she might be a fitting Spouse of God. (2) If every man has "the power to persevere and progress in good by the aid of divine grace", (3) how much more so she who was gladdened by the waves of the graces of the Spirit: whose mind was ruled by God. (4)

Furthermore, the Damascene never repeats the adverse interpretations of certain Scripture texts which he must have found in the writings of some of the Greek Fathers. (5)

Far from indicating a doubt, Mary's question to the angel proceeded from her prudence. (6) The sword which was to pierce Mary's heart was interpreted as a doubt

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(1) 2 *Dorm.* 3 (728A).
(2) Above, Ch. II, D, p. 73.
(3) FO ii, 12 (94, 924A).
(4) Θεοκυβέρνητον. Above, Ch. IV.
(5) For references to the Fathers who imputed some sort of sin to Mary see EBERLE, *op. cit.*, p. 121 ff. — FRIEDEL, *op. cit.*, p. 279. — *Dict. de Théol. Catholique: Immaculée Conception*, T. VII, col. 886; and *Marie*, T, IX, col. 2422.
(6) Below, Sec. C.

concerning Christ's divinity by Origen, (1) St. Basil, (2) and others. The Damascene attaches his explanation thereof to his defense of Mary's virginity in *De Fide Orthodoxa:* "But even this blessed one, who was deemed worthy of gifts surpassing her nature, endured, at the time of the Passion, the pains which she escaped at childbirth. She felt the maternal affections of her heart torn, and when she saw Him whom she knew to be God when she bore Him, delivered up to death as a malefactor, her thoughts were cleft as by a sword. (3) This is the meaning of: "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce." (4) But the joy of the Resurrection which proclaimed Him God who died in the flesh, changed this sorrow." (5) Similarly, in the second homily on the Assumption: "It is fitting that she who looked upon her own Son on the cross, and who then received in her heart the sword which she had escaped in childbirth, should behold Him reigning with the Father." (6) Here there is no question of a doubt; the sword is the sword of sorrow. The Virgin Mother escaped the pains of childbirth at the nativity of our Lord, but now her heart is rent with compassion at the sight of her Son's immolation.

(1) *Hom.* 17 in Luc. PG 13, 1845BC.
(2) Ep. 260, PG 32, 968A.
(3) ὡς ῥομφαίᾳ τοῖς λογισμοῖς ἐσπαράττετο.
(4) Luc. 2, 35.
(5) FO iv, 14 (94, 1161C). Compare St. Sophronius of Jerusalem, *De Hypapante*, PG 87 (iii), 3298C: "Ac tuam ipsius.....animam pertransibit anceps gladius, ac mentem stupore percussam ensis percurret, quando enim oculis conspexeris sponte clavis cruci affixum... At non permanebit gladius ille pertransiens: numquam enim, o Dei Mater, in divini ex te conceptus, miræque ex te progenerationis oblivionem adducta fueris."
(6) 2 *Dorm.* 14 (96, 741B).

This doctrine of Mary's sinlessness might have been expected in one who esteemed Mary's spotless purity as highly as did the Doctor of Damascus. It is in perfect agreement with what he says about the fullness of grace of the Mother of God from her very birth. Furthermore, it will be shown in the third section of this chapter that at the conception of Christ, Mary was fully confirmed in grace, and consequently was impeccable for the future. (1)

B. Mary's Virtues

The Damascene, in his homily on the Nativity, bids Joachim and Anne offer their child to God, "embellished with the beauty of virtues, as with golden fringes." (2) They did, in fact, consecrate their little daughter to God's service in the temple. There, "enriched by the grace of the Spirit like a fruitful olive tree, she became the abode of every virtue." (3)

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(1) The following Synodal decision reechoes the Damascene's doctrine at every point: "Ora il privilegio della impeccabilità nella Madre del Verbo è ammesso dalla Chiesa Orientale. La *Synodus Hierosolymitana*, tenuta nel 1672, dice espressamente: "la santissima Vergine non ebbe nè conobbe peccato. In tre modi infatti l'uomo pecca: in pensiero, parole e opere. Non mai peccò in pensiero perchè conservò la mente incorrotta e immacolata, sempre intenta alla contemplazione delle cose divine. Non peccò in opere poichè fu più splendida e pura del sole: infatti come dal cataclisma fu salvata l'umana natura nell'arca, così chi guardasse la santissima Madre di Dio era libero dai flutti delle passioni. Finalmente non peccò mai in parole.," The work cited is Kimmel, *Monumenta Fidei Ecclesiae Orientalis*. Jenae, Mauke, 1850. IV, 1. I, p. 469. See *La Civilità Cattolica*, 78 (1927) IV, p. 534 (Dec. 17). *La Dottrina dei Moderni "Ortodossi" intorno alla Beata Vergine.*

(2) *I Nativ.* 9 (96, 673D).

(3) FO iv, 14 (94, 1160A).

The possession of the infused virtues, which may, perchance, be identified with the "natural virtues" of which the Damascene speaks, is a direct consequence of Mary's fullness of grace. In order to be adorned with all virtues, the holy Virgin had but to follow the bent of her nature, for "virtue is implanted in our nature by God... Without His cooperation and support we can neither will good, nor accomplish it. It is within our power to persevere in virtue and follow [the voice of] God calling us to its [practice]." (1) Since Mary was filled with the grace of the Spirit, she must not have found the least difficulty to walk in the way of righteousness. And since vice found no entrance into her soul, virtue always remained natural to her. (1)

St. John enters into few details concerning the individual virtues which Mary practiced. In the sketch of our Lady's life given in the first chapter, (2) as well as in the consideration of her virginity and of her freedom from concupiscence, most of the passages relating to this question have been cited.

The virtues of her ordinary, everyday life were most conspicuous. As a child, she was docile and obedient; as the spouse of St. Joseph, faithful to the performance of her household duties without the least concern about worldly affairs. She was modest in her bearing and in her dress. Her recollection was such that her mind was never withdrawn from its intimate union with God, from the sublimest contemplations. All worldly desires and

(1) FO ii, 30 (972A ff.)
(2) Above, pp. 14-16.

useless thoughts were banished as soon as they presented themselves. She remained humble in the midst of God's extraordinary gifts to her. (1) Despite her reserve, her words were cheerful for they proceeded from a calm soul.

The Damascene admires the maturity of Mary's mind whilst she was but a child. It was her prudence which prompted her to ask Gabriel to explain the manner of the virginal conception. Since what he said was evidently contrary to nature's laws and to her own promise to God, she feared lest she should be the victim of a temptation like unhappy Eve. (2) It may be noted here that St. John seems to place prudence and the other cardinal virtues above the theological virtues, the latter being consequent upon the former. (3) Nevertheless, in the *Homilia in Transfigurationem Domini*, he says with St. Paul that "charity is the summit and highest point of all the virtues, for perfection is defined by it." (4)

The virtues which most please the Mother of God in her devout clients are, no doubt, indicative of those she cherished particularly during her earthly sojourn. In the conclusion of the second homily on the Dormition, the holy preacher mentions virginity, purity and chastity,

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(1) The doubtful homily on the Annunciation renders the following testimony to Mary's humility: "Maria, cum eximiæ sanctitatis esset, excellentiam nobis monstravit humilitatis suæ, angelum excipiendo, eique fidem integram posito timore adhibendo." (96, 646A).

(2) *I Dorm.* 7 (96, 709); the same scene is picturesquely described in verse: *In Festum Annun., Carmen* (96, 851A).

(3) *De Virtute et Vitio*, (95, 85C).

(4) ἐν ταύτῃ. No. 10 (96, 560D).

in the first place. What could be more natural for her who was brighter than the sun by her virginity ? Peace and gentleness are highly acceptable to her, but she treats charity, mercy and humility with a marked preference. (1) With this we finish the all too summary enumeration of Mary's virtues found in the Damascene's works.

C. Fullness of Grace

A third point remains to be considered : the plenitude of Mary's grace. Born "the offspring of justice", God's grace was increased in her soul day by day until the angel of death feared to touch her. In the following pages, we shall follow our author's development step by step.

Mary was conceived as a "germ of grace", (2) dwelt in Anne's womb an "all-holy child", and was born "a divine Chariot ten thousand times greater than they who abound in divine grace, that is, the cherubim and seraphim." In the temple the preparation of God's Mother went on apace. She was "enriched by the Spirit like a fruitful olive tree ; she became the abode of every virtue... She sought sanctity, and became a holy and admirable Temple, worthy of the Most High God." (3) St. John has a particular predilection for the image of the olive tree planted on

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(1) 2 *Dorm.* 19 (96, 752BC).

(2) For the references, see Ch. IV, B. The attentive reader will have remarked that the fullness of Mary's initial grace is one of the principal arguments in favor of the Immaculate Conception. Since this point has been fully treated in the preceding chapter, it is only touched upon here for the sake of completeness.

(3) FO iv, 14 (94, 1160A).

the banks of the stream, and repeats it several times. (1) The true meaning of the comparison is indicated in the following passage, although the figure is changed: "You are wholly the City of the living God which the waves of the river, that is, the effusions of the gifts of the Holy Spirit fill with joy. For you have surpassed the cherubim, and have been placed above the seraphim, near to God." (2) The most abiding of these "gifts of the Holy Spirit" is the grace of which there is question forthwith. "O Virgin, endowed with divine grace, holy Temple of God,... not a temple decorated with gold and inanimate stones, but in place of gold, refulgent with the Spirit, instead of precious stones, a most precious pearl, Christ." (3)

So effective was this "forebedewing" (4) by the divine Spirit, that Gabriel might well address Mary as "full of grace". Commenting on the angel's reassuring words: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God," (5) the Damascene says: "Truly you have found grace who are worthy of grace. You have found grace who have performed the works of grace... You have found grace, you who bore the seeds of grace, and who gathered a most prolific ear of grace. You found the abyss of grace, who kept safe the vessel of a twofold virginity, for you preserved your soul virginal no less than your body." (6)

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(1) FO, as above; *I Nativ.* 9 (96, 676B); 2 *Dorm.* 14 (741A).
(2) 1 *Nativ.* 9 (676D).
(3) *I Nativ.* 10 (96, 677A).
(4) *I Dorm.* 3 (704A).
(5) Luke 1, 30.
(6) *I Dorm.* 7 (96, 709B). Maria "gratiam nacta est.....ut ei non fuerit in anterioribus in puritate similis, nec futurus in posterioribus

Unfathomable as this "abyss of grace" (1) may have already been when God's messenger greeted the holy Virgin, it was the Incarnation of the Word that raised her to the perfection of grace and confirmed her in its possession. "Nevertheless, if the death of all the servants of God is blessed, it is by the end [of their lives] that they are confirmed as pleasing to God, (2) and for this reason their death is blessed. It perfected them and made them happy, granting them stability in virtue, according to the prophetic word: 'Praise not any man before death.' (3) But we will refer this to you [Mary]. For beatitude is yours, nor is it acquired by death. Neither did your passing bring you to perfection, nor again did your decease place you in security. For the beginning, continuation (4), and consummation (5), the security and true confirmation (6) of all your inconceivable gifts was your conception without seed, the divine inhabitation, your childbearing without corruption. Wherefore, you said in truth that all nations would call you blessed, not from the time of your death, but from the very conception [of Christ]. And hence death did not make you blessed but you rather glorified death by destroying its sadness and showing it to be a joy." (7)

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pari sanctitate præditus." (In the doubtful *Hom. in Annunciat.*, P.G. 96, 645D).

(1) Cf. also 2 *Dorm.* 17 (745A).

(2) ἀσφαγὲς περιγίνεται τῆς πρὸς θεὸν εὐαρεστήσως.

(3) Eccles. 11, 30.

(4) μεσότης.

(5) τέλος.

(6) ἀσφάλειά τε καὶ... βεβαίωσις.

(7) *I Dorm.* 12 (96, 717B). Cf. *Summa Theologica* III, q. 27, a. 5,

St. John makes few allusions to Mary's life between the time of the birth of Jesus and her death, but what little he does say permits us to conclude that her sanctity did not cease to grow until her earthly pilgrimage ended. He defends her fidelity to her firm proposal to remain always a virgin. He shows her to us suffering with Jesus on Calvary. He calls her "more holy than the saints" (1) when he contemplates her on her deathbed. (2)

In his homilies on the Dormition, the Damascene expresses his surprise that death should touch her who was so highly favored by heaven, and who was "wholly united to God." (3) Mary died in order to follow her Son's example, and to enter into a better life: "Today the Treasure of Life, the abyss of grace... is covered by a vivifying death." (4) Her death raised another question: How could heaven receive her who had "become wider than the heavens?" (5) The answer shows the sublime heights of Mary's final grace: "It is not by corporeal mass that she was more ample than the heavens... but she rather surpassed the measure of every height and depth by her grace." (6)

Such was the superabundance of that grace that Mary's

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ad 2. "In conceptione autem Filii Dei consummata est ejus gratia confirmans eam in bono."

(1) ἁγίων ἁγιωτέραν.

(2) 2 *Dorm.* 4 (96, 729A).

(3) 2 *Dorm.* 3 (96, 728B).

(4) Ibid. 2 (725C).

(5) See St. Modestus of Jerusalem, *Encomium in B. Virginem* VIII, (PG 86bis, 3296C): πρὸς τὴν ὑψηλοτέραν καὶ εὐρυχωροτέραν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ...

(6) *I Dorm.* 13 (720A).

blessed remains shared it. In its tomb, her sacred body was "an abundant source of grace", and imparted to its temporary abode "a divine odor and grace" (1) capable of producing all manner of miraculous effects.

In conclusion, we may say that the Damascene attributes to Mary that holiness which was necessary to make her a worthy Mother of God. No stain ever tarnished the immaculate purity of her soul which was adorned by the presence of all virtues. We may, in the various expressions of our author, distinguish three moments (2) in Mary's sanctification: at her birth she was already a holy mountain of sanctity, above the heights of the angels; at the Incarnation, she was confirmed in grace; and finally, when she went to her reward, her grace surpassed all measure.

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(1) 1 *Dorm.* 13 (720C).
(2) *Summa Theologica*, loc. cit. supra.

CHAPTER VI

THE ASSUMPTION

Saint John Damascene is known above all as the Doctor of the Assumption. No complete historical study of this feast can fail to mention the three homilies which he gratefully offered to his heavenly Queen in the winter (1) of his life. That the eloquent preacher appeared before the same audience three times on the same day is evident from his own statement at the beginning of the third homily. (2)

In the course of these superb encomiums of the Mother of God, the Damascene recounts to his hearers what he has been able to glean from the traditions of the past, and shows them how Mary's corporeal assumption into heaven was a most fitting complement of the incomparable privileges which God had bestowed upon her. The homilies show, therefore, that if, in the middle of the eighth century, the feast of the Dormition, or Assumption, (3) commemorated principally Mary's death and

(1) 2 *Dorm.* 1 (96, 724A).

(2) 3 *Dorm.* 1 and 5 (753A, 761B).

(3) The feast of the Dormition was certainly celebrated in the sixth century. Some authors place its origin at a considerably earlier date. See *Dictionnaire Pratique des Connaissances Religieuses: Assomption; Catholic Encyclopedia: Assumption;* Kellner, *Heortologie.* 3d ed. Freiburg im Br., 1911.

burial, it also included the thought of her bodily entry into the celestial realms. (1)

In the following pages, we shall consider succesively the reasons for Mary's submission to the law of death, the so-called Jerusalem tradition of her passage from this life to a higher and better one, and finally, the reasons for Mary's glorious Assumption and her place in the heavenly kingdom.

A. Reasons for Mary's Death

The death of the Mother of God was in complete harmony with the life which it crowned. "Glorious, truly holy, and most praiseworthy was the death (2) of her whose childbearing was marvelous, whose gestation surpassed nature and understanding and was salutary to the world." (3)

But why did Mary die ? The Damascene does not suggest any physical cause for her death, but rather explains why she submitted to a law which, most assuredly, was not made for her. We have seen in a previous chapter (4), that whilst Adam was united to God by grace, he was immortal. It is probably on account of Mary's close

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(1) Father Albert Janssens (*De Heilige Maagd*, p. 195) says that "the feast directly celebrates the blessed death of the holy Virgin." In itself, his statement is true: cf. 2 *Dorm.* 15 (96, 744B), but the Damascene does not, in fact, separate the two ideas.

(2) κοίμησις.

(3) 1 *Dorm.* 3 (96, 704A).

(4) Chapter IV.

union with God, (1) as well as because of her Divine Maternity and her perpetual virginity, that the Damascene finds it necessary to account for the holy Virgin's death. "How should death swallow up her who... conceived the person of the Word of God... without pleasure and union; who fittingly brought [Him] forth without pain; and who was wholly united to God ? These things are foreign, —entirely strange to her God-bearing soul and body. "(2) Similarly, in the *Canon in Dormitionem,* our author says: "Life was brought forth from you whilst the seals of your virginity remained intact. How, then, has your undefiled tabernacle which is the source of Life, shared the experience of death ?" (3) For this reason, death feared to touch her: "Seeing her, Death feared; for, having attacked her Son, it learned from what it suffered and was made prudent by the experience." (4) The apostles, begging the holy Virgin not to leave them, use the following argument: "If you wish to stay, you can do so, (5) and there is nothing to keep you if you are desirous of taking your leave." (6)

Wishing to be like her Divine Son in all things, Mary

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(1) 2 *Dorm.* 2 (725B); ibid. 3 (727B).

(2) 3 *Dorm.* 3 (728B).

(3) VI, (96, 1365A). This thought, first found in Pseudo-Dionysius, the Areopagite (*De Div. Nom.* III, 1, PG III, 681C: τοῦ ζωαρχικοῦ καὶ θεοδόχου σώματος), found great favor with the Greek Fathers. The Damascene repeats it in a variety of different ways: θεοδόχου σώματος: 1 *Dorm.* 4 (705B); 3 *Dorm.* 4 (760B); ἡ πηγὴ τῆς ζωῆς: 1 *Dorm.* 10 (713C); 3 *Dorm.* 3 (757B); ζωαρχικοῦ σώματος: 2 *Dorm.* 2 (724D); ibid. 5 (729C); ζωοδόχου σώματος: 2 *Dorm.* 3 (728B); etc.

(4) 3 *Dorm.* 3 (728C).

(5) τὸ δύνασθαι πάρεστι.

(6) 2 *Dorm.* 8 (736A).

accepted the penalty which He did not refuse, in order that, with Him, she might be clothed with incorruption. The Damascene expresses this thought in the following words: "Oh! how is the Fount of Life drawn to life by way of death? Oh! how does she who in childbirth surpassed the bounds of nature, now obey its laws and submit her spotless body to death? It was fitting that, having put off the corruptible, she be clothed with incorruption, since even the Lord of nature did not refuse to experience death." (1)

The same thought is repeated in the second homily with insistance on the idea of conformity, for it seemed altogether incongruous to the holy Doctor, that the Mother of Life should be subject to death. "Today, the Treasury of Life... is enshrouded by a vivifying (2) death, and she who bore the Conqueror of death, meets it without fear, if, indeed, I must call her all-holy, life-like (3) decease, death. How should she be subject to death who offered life to all? But she yields to the law laid down by Him whom she bore, and as a daughter of the ancient Adam, she undergoes (4) the paternal chastisements, since her Son who is Life itself did not refuse them. Thus, being the Mother of the living God, she is transferred to Him in a worthy manner. For if God said, 'Lest perhaps' the first man 'put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever' (5)—how should she who

(1) 1 *Dorm.* 10 (713D).
(2) ζωηφόρῳ.
(3) ζωτικήν.
(4) ὑπερέρχεται.
(5) Gen. 3, 22.

received the Life which has no beginning nor end,... not live forever ?" (1) In other words, if Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise lest they eat of the tree of life and become immortal, how should she be subject to death who partook of a fruit far surpassing the most wonderful products of the earthly Paradise ? It is in the light of these explanations that we must understand the words, "she sent her body into the earth because of Adam." (2) She accepted Adam's condemnation because Jesus did not refuse it.

If the close union which existed between the Mother and the Son is the first reason why Mary died, the passage to a better Life, a life of incorruption, may, according to the Damascene's doctrine, be given as a second reason. He seems to consider death as a necessary means of attaining the incorruption of the future life. (3) Hence, he bids Mary: "Depart, O Queen, depart! Do not, like Moses, ascend and die. Rather die [first], and thus ascend." (4) Adam and Eve, surprised that she who reversed their fall, should die, can account for this only by the consideration that death is the way to incorruption: "How should you experience death, Immaculate One ? For you, death will be a bridge to life, a ladder to heaven, and a passage to immortality." (5)

Jesus Himself died that so He might enter into His glory. "How... did He, who by corruption acquired in-

(1) εἰς αἰῶνα ζήσεται τὸν ἀπάροντον ; 2 *Dorm.* 2 (96, 725CD).
(2) 3 *Dorm.* 4 (760C).
(3) FO iv, 9 (94, 1120BC).
(4) 3 *Dorm.* 4 (760B).
(5) 2 *Dorm.* 8 (96, 733C).

corruption and again ascended to the Father, draw His Mother according to the flesh to her Creator—raise her who was the earthly Heaven to the heavenly land ? To-day the animated, spiritual Ladder by which the Most High descended, was seen upon earth and lived with men, herself used death as a ladder to mount from earth to heaven." (1)

The death of the Mother of God would be inconceivable for St. John if it were not a means to a better and purer life. "Is it possible (2) that the Source of life, the Mother of my Lord has died ? It was fitting that what was composed of earth should again return to the earth and so be transferred to heaven, taking up from the earth the all-pure life which was given it in the deposition of the body. It was fitting that after the flesh had cast off the earthly and darksome weight (3) of mortality in death, like gold in a furnace, it should come forth from the tomb incorrupt and pure, shining with the light of incorruptibility." (4) For Mary, death was a pure gain, as the apostles reminded her when she was about to leave them: "For you, even death is life, a better life, indeed, incomparably surpassing this life." (5)

The Damascene does not, however, doubt the reality of Mary's death. He plainly teaches that her soul was separated from her body and preceded the latter to heaven. The difference between the holy Virgin's death and that

(1) 3 *Dorm.* 1 and 2 (753CD).
(2) βαβαί !
(3) πάχος.
(4) 3 *Dorm.* 3 (757BC).
(5) 2 *Dorm.* 8 (736A).

of other servants of God is due to its transitory nature. "There is an infinite difference between [the death of] the servants of God, and that of His Mother. What, then, shall we call this mystery concerning you ? Death ? Even if your all-holy soul was separated from your all-blessed and undefiled body according to nature, (1) and your body was placed into its tomb as usual, it did not, nevertheless, remain in death, nor was it disintegrated by corruption." (2) Elsewhere, he says that, having been born in a natural manner, she finished her course "by a fitting death" (3), that is, one corresponding to her nature. The circumstances of her death will be described in the recital of the Jerusalem tradition.

Since the separation of Mary's body from her soul was so brief, the Greeks prefer to call our Lady's demise *κοίμησις* (a dormition, sleeping, rest, repose), rather than *θάνατος* (death). Similarly, the Damascene, having asked himself what he should call the Virgin's passing, replies : "Wherefore we shall not call your holy departure (4), death (5), but a lying down to sleep (6), or a going abroad (7),

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(1) φυσικῶς.
(2) *I Dorm.* 10 (96, 716A).
(3) *Canon in Dorm.* III (96, 1364B).
(4) μετάστασιν.
(5) θάνατον.
(6) κοίμησιν. St. ANDREW OF CRETE says: "When we die and live again after death, and that life is a better one, clearly this is not death, but a dormition (κοίμησις), and an upward path (ἐπάνοδος) to the other life, sending the departed thither through the absolute cessation from earthly occupations." (*In Dorm. S. Mariae* I, PG 97, 1049A).
(7) ἐκδημίαν.

or, better still, a homecoming (1). For, leaving (2) the things of the body, you enter into possession of better things "(3). Nevertheless, when the Damascene, in the course of his homilies (4) and in the Canon (5) on the Dormition, uses the word *μετάστασις* "decease, departure," it is not without a certain implication of her translation to the celestial paradise, especially when he uses the verbal form.

Mary's death was not a penalty which she had to pay to the divine justice, and consequently, it was neither painful nor humiliating for her, but rather a joyful transition to a better life. "Before she was in travail, she bore; her departure also was without pain. 'The death of the wicked is very evil,' (6) but in her in whom the sting of death, that is, sin, has been extinguished—what shall we say, unless that it was the beginning of a better and eternal life? As the death of the saints of the Lord God of powers is truly precious, the demise of the Mother of God is more than precious." (7)

Mary has taken away the sting of death and rendered it the object of a joyous feast. "Death, formerly execrable and hateful, is now praised and called blessed. Formerly

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(1) ἐνδημίαν. A sojourn, a residence.

(2) ἐκδημοῦσα.

(3) ἐνδημεῖς πρὸς τὰ κρείττονα. 1 *Dorm.* 10 (716C). Compare this with II Cor. 5, 8: "But we are confident, and have a good will to be absent rather from the body (ἐκδημῆσαι), and to be present with the Lord." (ἐνδημῆσαι).

(4) 1 *Dorm.* 10 and 12 (716C and 717C); 2 *Dorm.* 3 (728C); 3 *Dorm.* 1 (753C).

(5) Nos. 3, 5, 7, 9 (96, 1364 and 1365).

(6) Ps. 33, 22.

(7) ὑπέρτιμος. 2 *Dorm.* 3 (96, 728C).

the host of grief and sorrow, of tears and sadness, death is now declared the source of joy and high festivity." (1) If the death of all the servants of God is blessed because it confirms them in God's grace, this reason cannot be urged for Mary, because she was confirmed in grace by the conception of Christ. "Wherefore, death did not render you blessed, but you rather have glorified it by destroying its sadness and showing it to be a joy. Wherefore, your holy and all-pure body was placed in its honorable tomb, whilst angels preceded, followed, and stood all around; nor is it likely that they neglected to do anything that was fitting for the Mother of their Lord; the apostles and the whole congregation [of the faithful] of the Church sang divine hymns and applauded through [the inspiration of] the Spirit." (2)

There can be no shame in such a burial. Jesus Himself was placed in the tomb in a far more quiet manner. "If her incomprehensible Fruit by whom the heavens were made, voluntarily entered the grave because He was mortal, (3) how will she who conceived without the aid of a man, refuse the tomb?" (4)

Let us now pass on to the consideration of the things that took place at Mary's death, burial, and Assumption.

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(1) πανηγύρεως. 1 *Dorm.* 12 (717B).
(2) 1 *Dorm.* 12 (717CD).
(3) ὡς θνητός.
(4) *Canon in Dorm.* IV (96, 1364C).

B. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF MARY'S DEATH, BURIAL, AND ASSUMPTION

A full account of the holy Virgin's death and Assumption is found in the second of the three homilies which our author preached on that certain fifteenth of August. Various details which are here presented are also found in the other homilies, as well as in the *Canon in Dormitionem* which reëchoes the homilies in many a phrase.

The recital is introduced by the following words: "It does not seem to me to be out of place in the sermon which I am preaching, to describe to the best of my ability, *to conjecture*, and to set forth in outline the events which came to pass in the holy Mother of God,—which in a brief and only too synoptic form, (1) we have received [by tradition], (2) from father to son—as the saying goes—from former times." (3) *"It seems to me"*, (4) he continues —we summarize his words—that I see the holy Virgin lying on an humble bed in that room on Mount Sion (5) where Christ celebrated the Last Supper with His dis-

(1) μετρίως καὶ λίαν συνοπτικῶς.

(2) παρειλήφαμεν. The question of this tradition will be studied below.

(3) 2 *Dorm.* 4 (729A). In the following pages, in order not to multiply the references unnecessarily, the beginning of each succeeding paragraph of the homily will be noted. The «Jerusalem tradition» is contained in paragraphs 4 to 14 of the second homily on the Dormition, col. 729 to 741. References to other sources introduced for the sake of completeness will be cited in the usual way.

(4) Ibid. Δοκῶ μοι.

(5) 3 *Dorm.* 4 (757C).

ciples, where Jesus appeared to Thomas to confirm his faith, and where the Holy Ghost descended in the form of fiery tongues. (1) "This is the most eminent (2) of all the Churches and the assembly place of the disciples." This "mother of all the Churches throughout the world", (3) had become Mary's abode (4) after the Resurrection. Here the "virgin and theologian", (5) St. John, ministered to the needs of the Ever-Virgin Mother of God.

What will Jesus do to honor His Mother? (6) "The divine command hurries the apostles (7) to Jerusalem from the ends of the earth, *as a net or a cloud* (8) which urges on and brings together a number (9) of eagles. For 'wheresoever the body shall be', Jesus, [who is] the Truth, said, 'there shall the eagles also be gathered together'." (10) Our Lord referred to His second coming when He pronounced these words, but they are *"not unfittingly adduced*

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(1) For a discussion of the identity of the place where all of these things took place, see *Revue Biblique*, t. viii, 1899, p. 589-600. *La Dormition de la Ste. Vierge et la Maison de Jean Marc*, by M. J. LAGRANGE.

(2) ἀκρόπολις.

(3) St. Andrew of Crete uses a similar expression: *In Dorm. Sanctae Mariae* III, (PG 97, 1104).

(4) ἐνδιαίτημα. St. Andrew of Crete uses the same word referring to the cenacle of Mt. Sion: *In Dorm. S. Mariae* I (97, 1064B).

(5) 1 *Dorm.* 9 (713C).

(6) 2 *Dorm.* 6 (732A-D).

(7) The thought, as well as the words, are from St. Modestus, who, however, says that "God alone knows" how the apostles came. *Encomium in B. Virginem* 7 (86bis, 3296C).

(8) On the force of a parallel passage in the first homily (No. 9, 713C), the ἡ of the text (731A) has been changed to ᾗ in the above translation.

(9) τινας.

(10) Matth. 24, 28.

here as a seasoning for the sermon." (1) The eye-witnesses and ministers of the Incarnate Word, therefore, were there, gladly ministering to His Mother, and drawing from her a blessing as a rich and most precious inheritance. (2) Their attendants and ministers—amongst others, the blessed Hierotheus (3)—who shared in the apostles' labors were also there to share in their blessings. A great crowd of the faithful of Jerusalem were present, as were also all the choirs of the heavenly spirits, the souls of the just, of the patriarchs and prophets. (4) Inspired words (5) were spoken in divine accents, and hymns referring to Mary's departure were sung. (6)

Then Adam and Eve (7) praised their daughter for having destroyed the curse which they had brought upon the world, and for having reopened to them the gates of paradise. They bade her come to them. But the faithful who surrounded the deathbed prayed Mary to stay with them to be their sole consolation on earth. (8) The apostles, *"it seems to me"*, (9) addressed similar petitions to the

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(1) ὥσπερ ἡδύσματι.

(2) Cf. St. Modestus, *Encomium in B. Virg.*, 13, loc. cit., 3212A.

(3) 3 *Dorm.* 4 (96, 760A). The presence of Hierotheus is attested by the Pseudo-Areopagite (*De Div. Nom.* III, PG. III, 681), and by his commentator, St. Maximus, whose works the Damascene certainly read (*Scholia in Lib. de Div. Nom.* III, PG IV, 236A). Cf. St. Andrew of Crete who also used the above: Hom. I *in Dorm.* PG 97, 1065B.

(4) Cf. 1 *Dorm.* 9 (713C).

(5) 2 *Dorm.* 7 (732A).

(6) Cf. 1 *Dorm.* 12 (717D).

(7) 2 *Dorm.* 8 (734B).

(8) Compare St. Modestus, *Encomium in B. Virg.* 11, PG 86bis, 3305C ff. with 2 *Dorm.* 8 and 9.

(9) 2 *Dorm.* 9 (736A).

holy Virgin. Then, rapt in ecstasy, they composed sacred hymns which were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Their content, *I should think,* (1) referred to the passing nature of this life, and to the mysteries of the future joys.

"Thereupon, (2) *it seems to me, certain suitable things* [*which were*] *in harmony with the preceding, took place.*" Jesus came to receive the holy soul of His Mother. She addressed Him thus: "Into your hands, my Son, do I commend my spirit. Receive my soul which is dear to You, and which You preserved stainless. I offer my body to You, and not to the earth. Keep it safe, You who were pleased to dwell in it, and who in birth preserved it virginal. You have come to me, that where You are... I shall also be dwelling with You... At my departure, be a solace to my dear children whom You were pleased to call brothers. Through my extended hands, add a blessing to their blessing. Then, having raised her hands, *it is likely,* (3) that she blessed those who were assembled [there]." Jesus, addressing her in the words of the Spouse in the Canticle of Canticles, received her soul into His own hands. (4)

At her death, (5) *it seems to me,* (6) there was a commotion of the elements. Voices and sounds were heard, then the singing of angels, some of whom accompanied the immaculate and all-holy soul until they placed the Queen

(1) ὡς ἐμὲ εἰδέναι.
(2) 2 *Dorm.* 10 (736B).
(3) οἷα εἰκός.
(4) Cf. 1 *Dorm.* 10 (713D); ibid. 4 (705C).
(5) 2 *Dorm.* 11 (737A).
(6) ὥς γέ μοι δοκεῖ.

beside the royal throne; others surrounded the body, and honored the Mother of God with appropriate hymns. The bystanders embraced the holy body, and were filled with holiness and blessings by the contact. The earth, the air, (1) the water—all that came into contact with this blessed Tabernacle was purified and sanctified. The sick were cured, the blind obtained sight, devils were driven out.

When the pure body had been washed, it was wrapped in a clean winding sheet, and again placed on the bed; lamps and ointments were brought, whilst the angels, the apostles and the holy Fathers sang suitable hymns under the influence of the Holy Ghost.

Finally, (2) the apostles raised the true Ark of the Lord on their shoulders and carried it through the midst of the city to the garden of Gethsemane, as the ark of the covenant was carried to Mt. Sion in the days of King David (3); angels preceded and followed, covering the bier with their wings. A great number of the faithful formed the funeral procession. Thus, whilst Mary's soul was carried to the throne of God by the angels, her holy body, hidden in the splendor of the unseen divinity of the King of Kings, was carried by the apostles to the grave, whence it was translated to the delights of the celestial Eden. (4)

"Perhaps some Jews (5) who were not entirely in bad

(1) Cf. 1 *Dorm.* 11 (716D).
(2) 2 *Dorm.* 12 (737C).
(3) Cf. 1 *Dorm.* 12 (717D).
(4) Cf. 1 *Dorm.* 12 (720A); 2 *Dorm.* 3 (727D).
(5) 2 *Dorm.* 13 (740B).

faith, were present. [It is not unfitting] (1) *to bring into my discourse what is recounted by many, as a seasoning is added to the meat. They say* that when the funeral procession arrived at the foot of the mountain, a certain Jew, a servant of sin, imitating the domestic of Caiphas who struck the face of Christ, took hold of the bier with both hands, intending to throw it to the ground; but he reaped the fruit of his rashness before he accomplished his evil design. *"They say"* that he was instantly deprived (2) of the use of both of his hands. The sudden misfortune moved him to faith and wisdom. Those who carried the bier stopped whilst he touched the body with his useless hands. The Fount of miracles healed him immediately."

In the garden, (3) the sacred body was again embraced and honored with encomiums and sacred hymns. Then it was placed into a glorious and marvelous tomb, through which, as through another Jordan, it was, on the third day, transmitted to the true promised land, the heavenly Jerusalem of which God is the Builder and Creator. (4)

Here the connected recital ends. The following details concerning the tomb may be added to complete the narration. Asked what had become of its precious treasure,

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(1) MIGNE'S text here reads: οὐχ οἷον δέ, ὥσπερ ὄψῳ παράρτυμα, τὸ τοῖς πολλῶν περιφερόμενον χείλεσι προσμίξαι τῷ διηγήματι. Ab re vero non est, hoc loci aliquid, quod multorum sermone circumfertur, huic narrationi tanquam condimentum eduliis, admiscere. The text οὐχ οἷον δέ, may be corrupted. Possibly the original read: οὐκ ἄτοπον δέ... as in 2 *Dorm.* 4 (729A), and ibid. 6 (732B).

(2) ἐκλελοιπέναι αὐτόν.

(3) 2 *Dorm.* 14 (740D).

(4) 1 *Dorm.* 12 (720A); 2 *Dorm.* 12 (740A).

the tomb answered: "Why do you seek in the tomb her who has been raised to the heavenly tabernacles? Why do you demand an account of corruption from me? I have not the power to resist the divine commands. The holy and pure body left the winding-sheets, and after it had given me a share in its holiness, and filled me with perfume (1) and fragrance, and made me a sacred place, it was taken away, guarded by the angels and archangels, and by all the heavenly powers." (2) Elsewhere our author says that the angels and archangels "transported" Mary to heaven; the reference, however, may be to the soul alone. The arrival of that blessed soul was an occasion of jubilation to David and to all choirs of the angels. (3)

The tomb which had for a short time harbored the holy body of the Mother of God, and which the Angels even now guard and the devils fear, became an inexhaustible source of all kinds of miracles. (4) It was more honorable than Eden, for the latter cast the human race down to the earth, whilst the former raised a mortal body up to heaven. It was more precious than the tabernacle and ark of Moses, because it contained the reality whilst the latter harbored only shadows and types. (5) It is not impossible that the Damascene preached in the near

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(1) μύρον.
(2) 2 *Dorm.* 17 (745B); cf. 1 *Dorm.* 13 (720B). Compare *Encomium in B. Virgin.* 4 (86bis, 3289A), of St. Modestus.
(3) 1 *Dorm.* 11 (716D); cf. 2 *Dorm.* 2 (724CD).
(4) 1 *Dorm.* 13 (720BC); cf. 2 *Dorm.* 17 (745B-D).
(5) 3 *Dorm.* 2 (756CD).

proximity of the grave, for he invites his hearers to enter the monument (1) in order to honor it. (2)

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This account of the passage of Mary to the other world gives rise to a twofold question : where did the Damascene find the details of this story, and what value does he attach to them ?

There can be no doubt about St. John's dependance on St. Modestus, Patriarch of Jerusalem in the first part of the seventh century. (3) He borrows whole phrases from the latter's *Encomium in Dormitionem Beatae Virginis.* It is not impossible that he read the three homilies of St. Andrew of Crete. There is a great similarity in the details of the Dormition given by the one and the other, but the stylistic and verbal resemblances, excepting in St. Andrew's third homily (4) are far less evident than in

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(1) μνήματος.

(2) 3 *Dorm.* 5 (761B) ; *Canon in Dorm.* ix (96, 1368A)...This is also the opinion of Fr. Jugie : *Dictionnaire de Théologie Cath., St. Jean Damascène,* t. viii, c. 703 : "Les trois homélies sur la Dormition prononcées en un seul jour, c'est-à-dire un 15 août, vraisemblablement à Gethsémané même, dans l'Église qui abritait le tombeau de la Vierge."

(3) The editor of the *Encomium in B. Virginem* in Migne says : "Damascenus ...certe hoc Modestii Encomium legit, ut pluribus ex locis apparet, in quibus eadem, quæ Modestus, fere iisdem verbis dicit." (PG 86bis, 3297).

(4) Since St. Andrew died some thirty years before our author, it is not at all impossible for him to have read the patriarch's homilies. Below are indicated a number of passages which would show a dependence of the Damascene on the third homily of Saint Andrew.

the case of St. Modestus; mutual dependence on a common source may suffice to explain the similarities.

The Damascene used the apocrypha (1) which treat of Mary's death with a certain reserve, and without attaching any historical importance to the details he borrows, as we shall presently see. The apocryphal work naturally indicated by our author's homilies is the *Liber de Dormitione Mariae* (2) attributed to St. John, the Evangelist. Judging by the divergences, (3) and the modifications in-

St. John Damascene: Homilies *in Dormitionem* (PG 96)	*St. Andrew of Crete:* *Hom. III in Dorm.* (PG 97).
2, 1 (724B) .... μητρὶ τοῦ Λόγου.....	Ca. finem, 1108A.
2, 4 (729A) .... εἰκάσαι..... Εἰκαστικῶς	Ca. initium, 1089C.
2, 16 (744D) .... / 3, 3 (757AB).... / 1 Nativ. (661B) . Praises.	Ca. finem, 1104BC.
1, 13 (719B) .... τρίπηχυ (σῶμα)	Ca. initium, 1092A.
1, 8 (712B) .... ψυχαί	Ca. initium, 1092A.
2, 17 (745B) .... ἁγιασμοῦ... μύρου..... εὐωδίας...	Ca. initium, 1092A.

(1) See JANSSENS, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

(2) Τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ θεολόγου λόγος εἰς τὴν κοίμησιν τῆς ἁγίας θεοτόκου.
Apocalypses Apocryphæ. C. TISCHENDORF. Lipsiæ, 1866, pp. 95-112.

(3) Divergences:

St. John Damascene:		*Pseudo-John:*
1 Dorm. 9 (713C): ὡς ἐν νεφέλῃ	Ch. 6 p. 97, op cit.:	διὰ νεφέλης.
2 Dorm. 6 (732A): ὥσπερ τις νεφέλη	12 99,	" "
Nothing of this in the Damascene.	4-35	96 ff.: Stay at Bethlehem.
2 Dorm. 4 (729C): In the Cenacle	32	105: εἰς τὸν οἶκον τῆς δεσποίνης.
	34	106: ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ οἴκῳ ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ.
2 Dorm. 10 (736CD): Jesus comes	38	107: On throne of cherubim.
2 Dorm. 11 (737A): Beside the throne	39	108: Mary's soul was to go to the treasury of the Father.
2 Dorm. 10 (736D): She blesses *all*	44	109: She blesses *each.*

troduced by the Damascene, one might conclude that he did not use this book at first hand, but considering the widespread diffusion of the apocrypha at this period, there is no reason for such an assumption. It is more probable that he accepted only those details which did not conflict with his "tradition", and which harmonized with the exceptional character of her whose death he was describing. St. John does not tell us anything new; all the incidents which he relates may be found in the apocrypha.

The Damascene speaks of a tradition which summarily contained the details of Mary's death. (1) This is, no doubt, the "Jerusalem tradition" (2) of the Assumption which probably owes its name less to the fact that it was constantly preserved in the Holy City, than that Jerusalem is the center of the events recounted. Its origin is unknown. For our author it seems to contain the following details: Mary dwelt in the Cenacle after the Resurrection of Jesus; St. John cared for her there; the

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Points of contact: Presence of the apostles (Ps.-John, 6); Mary's soul to heaven, her body to paradise (39); Mary blesses the apostles (44); apostles sanctified by contact with Mary's lifeless body (45); story of the impious Jew (46 and 47); fragrance of the tomb in Gethsemane, — the angelic songs, Assumption after three days (48). It is not impossible that St. John used an apocryphal text which we do not possess. The apocrypha, especially those of the Dormition of Mary, were freely changed. The reference to a descent to Hades (2 *Dorm.* 3, c. 728C), recalls Pseudo-Melitus of Sardis: *De Transitu Virginis Mariae* (PG V, c. 1231-1240). Our author, however, differs more frequently from Pseudo-Melitus than from Ps.-John, the Evangelist, from whom the former is derived.

(1) 2 *Dorm.* 4 (729A).

(2) In favor of the Jerusalem tradition, see. J. NIRSCHL, *Das Grab der Hl. Jungfrau Maria*, Mainz. 1896. A more recent summary of the question may be found in the report of the *Congrès Marial de Nantes: L'Assomption de la B. V. M.* Nantes, 1925, pp. 36-50.

apostles were present at Mary's death; Jesus came to receive His Mother's soul; the sacred body was laid to rest in the Garden of Gethsemane. All other details must be included among the "conjectures" which he said he would make. He found the former details in the writings of the preceding Fathers, especially in the *Encomium* of St. Modestus, (1) and consequently considered them particularly credible. Yet, we must say that this "tradition" is not on the same plane with the other traditions of the Church which must be received like the Scriptures themselves. (2) Amongst the examples of facts and customs which have come down to us by tradition, St. John mentions the triple immersion at baptism, the custom of facing the East when praying, the identity of the sacred sepulcre of our Lord—how could this ardent lover of the Mother of God have twice failed to mention Mary's tomb in this connection, if he considered the tradition which vouched for its precise place as of equal certainty with the former? (3) Furthermore, how is it that the staunch defender of sacred images and relics never mentions Mary's tomb, or the winding-sheets in any writing save those bearing directly on the Dormition?

The latter discussion leads us on to the question of the historical value of the details of Mary's death and Assumption according to St. John Damascene. Various authors (4) have called attention to the fact that the

(1) St. Modestus is also dependant on Pseudo-John: JANSSENS, *op. cit.*, p. 179, note (1).
(2) *De Imag.* Or. I, 23 (94, 1256B).
(3) Ibid. C; *De Imag.* Or. II, 16 (94, 1301CD).
(4) JANSSENS, *op. cit.*, pp. 179, 188-190, 285-288. On page 286 we

Fathers insist rather on the theological reasons for the Assumption than on the historical aspect of the question. This is also true of our author, despite the fact that he is generally referred to as the principal exponent of the historical tradition.

It is evident from his constant use of conditional phrases, that the Damascene looks upon the details he gives, not as facts, but as possibilities, conjectures, things that might fittingly have taken place at Mary's death. When introducing the narration of Mary's death and burial, he says that he will "conjecture" (1) what took place. "It seems to me" (2), "it is likely" (3), "perhaps" (4), and similar expressions are constantly on his lips, for fear that his hearers should mistake his intention.

The apocrypha have no value in the eyes of St. John. (5) Hence, whilst he admits on the word of St. Modestus that the apostles were assembled at Mary's bedside by the order of her divine Son, he does not believe that they came on the clouds. (6) He says that, by the divine com-

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read: "Dogmatische redenen zijn 't die voor de Grieksche leeraars den doorslag geven."—Various authors are cited by KARL WIEDERKEHR, *Die Leibliche Aufnahme der Allerseligsten Jungfrau Maria in den Himmel*. Einsiedeln, 1927, pp. 105-110.

(1) 2 *Dorm.* 4 (96, 729A).

(2) 1 *Dorm.* 10 (716A); 2 *Dorm.* 9, 10, 11 (736A, B, 737A).

(3) 2 *Dorm.* 10 (736C and D).

(4) 2 *Dorm.* 13 (740B).

(5) *De Imag.* Or. II, 16 (94, 1301D): Here he says that the Manicheans wrote the Gospel according to St. Thomas, and ironically invites the Iconoclasts to write a Gospel according to Leo.

(6) JANSSENS, *op. cit.*, p. 197 and p. 200, also misread the Damascene's words. He translates: "op de wolken" (I, 9), instead of "as on a cloud". Ps.-John says: διὰ νεφέλης (ch. 6 and 12, p. 97 and 99). St. Andrew of Crete also says: διὰ νεφέλης ἐν Πνεύματι (In *Dorm. S. Mariae* I, PG 97, 1065C).

mand, "they came from the extremities of the earth, *as on a cloud*" (1). *"As a net or a cloud"* gathers the eagles, so did the command of Jesus bring the apostles to Jerusalem. (2) The latter expression, our author is careful to explain, is used merely to lend interest to his sermon. In his Canon on the Dormition, (3) there is no question of the cloud. Hence the following rhetorical flight in the third homily is to be understood in the light of the preceding clear passages: "Prepare yourself, universal cloud surrounding the world, and ye wings of the winds bringing the apostles to Sion from the extremities of the earth." (4)

Jesus, as a dutiful Son, came to receive the soul of His blessed Mother, (5) but not "seated on the throne of the cherubim", as Pseudo-John wrote. (6) The story of the Jew who dared to lay violent hands on the sacred remains of the Mother of God is also considerably modified. In the first place, it is introduced to lend interest to the discourse. The Damascene would not vouch for the truth of the incident: "*Perhaps* some Jews were present"; "they say" that this unfortunate one was punished immediately. Our author has not heard that the culprit's name was Jephonias, nor that his hands were struck off by an angel with "a fiery sword". Furthermore, according to the Damascene, the Jew was restored to his former in-

(1) 1 *Dorm.* 9 (713C).
(2) 2 *Dorm.* 6 (732AB).
(3) III (96, 1364B).
(4) 3 *Dorm.* 4 (757D).
(5) 1 *Dorm.* 4 (705B); 2 *Dorm.* 10 (736CD).
(6) *Liber de Dorm.* 38, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

tegrity by touching the wonder-working body, and not at the command of St. Peter, as Pseudo-John would have it.

From the foregoing considerations, it is evident that St. John Damascene cannot be cited as an outstanding proponent of the historical certainty of the Assumption. The lessons of the second nocturn in the Roman Breviary for the fourth day within the octave of the Assumption are parts of a paragraph interpolated (1) in the second homily at an early date.

We cannot, however, reject the Damascene's "tradition" unconditionally, and this for two reasons. In the first place, he speaks of an oral tradition, an account of which was passed down "from father to son from former times." May this oral tradition not be the basis of all the preceding writings on the question? Secondly, we know the Damascene's preoccupation not

(1) Our conclusion strengthens the arguments against the authenticity of no. 18 of the second homily on the Dormition (96, 748-751). It may be that the interpolator, seeing the uncertainty of the Damascene's statements, wished to place them upon a historical basis: hence the passage from the *Euthymiaca Historia*.—Assuming its authenticity, how could we explain the fact that neither in the four references to the coming of the apostles, nor in any other circumstance is the absence of St. Thomas, which this story relates, noted by St. John. This incident is not found in Pseudo-John.—M. JUGIE, in the article: *Jean Damascène*, in the *Dictionnaire de Théol. Cath.*, t. viii, col. 704, hesitated to reject this paragraph because of its presence in a MS. of A.D. 890. In 1926, however, he decided against its authenticity (*Échos d'Orient* 1926, t. 29, pp. 385-392 — Cited from *Ephemerides Lovanenses*, April 1927, p. 286).—RAUSCHEN also rejects no. 18: *op. cit.*, p. 458. AL. JANSSENS, *op. cit.*, pp. 205, 206, likewise rejects no. 18. Amongst the reasons given are the following: the citation of Pseudo-Dionysius who lived later than Juvenal; the fact that at the time of St. John Damascene the grave was supposed to be at Jerusalem, and that St. Germanus knew nothing about the facts related in the *Historia Euthymiaca*.

to teach anything new. (1) Yet, since the holy Doctor shows so much hesitation in the presentation of this "tradition", we must not attribute to it a value which he did not intend to give it. This admission does not, however, lessen the value of the holy Doctor's theological arguments in favor of Mary's bodily Assumption into heaven, as we shall presently see.

C. The Assumption

Whilst proceeding with the greatest reserve and hesitation in recounting the circumstances of Mary's death and burial, St. John Damascene finds her bodily Assumption into heaven a necessary complement to all the favors which God had bestowed upon her, especially that of the Divine Maternity. The Source of Life should not have seen death; conformity to her Divine Son, however, was a sufficient reason for submitting to that penalty. But it was altogether unbecoming that the Ark in which the Prince of Peace dwelt should see corruption.

The Damascene's statement of the corporeal Assumption is so clear that no doubt regarding his meaning is possible. "As the priests of old once carried the typical ark, so the college (2) of the apostles raised you, the true Ark of the Lord God, upon their shoulders, and placed you in the

(1) These remarks were suggested by the article: *Die Kirchliche Ueberlieferung von der Leiblichen Aufnahme der seligen Gottesmutter in den Himmel.* H. Jürgens, S.J. *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie.* Innsbruck, 1880, pp. 595-650; especially pp. 613 ff.

(2) δῆμος.

tomb, through which, as through another Jordan, they sent you to the true promised Land, the supernal Jerusalem, the mother of all the faithful, whose Builder and Creator is God. Your soul did not go down into hell, (1) nor did your flesh see corruption. (2) Your stainless and all-undefiled body was not left in the earth, O Queen, Lady, Mistress, Mother of God and true Theotokos, but was translated (3) to the royal mansions of the heavens." (4) This thought is repeated in similar words in the second homily. "But her body... was placed in the tomb, as in a bridal chamber, and through it into the delights of Eden (5) and into celestial tabernacles." (6) She was not, like Elias, assumed "into heaven, as it were", (7) nor like St. Paul, into the third heaven, but she was reunited to her Son in the highest heavens. (8) According to the tradition cited above, the Assumption of the body took place three days after its deposition. (9)

St. John Damascene does not, like St. Andrew of Crete, (10) directly propose the empty tomb as a proof of

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(1) ᾅδην.
(2) Cf. Ps. 15, 10.
(3) μετατεθεῖσα.
(4) 1 *Dorm.* 12 (717D and 720A).
(5) As Father Jansens remarks (*op. cit.*, p. 199, note 3), St. John Damascene uses the words Paradise, Eden, and heaven interchangeably.
(6) 2 *Dorm.* 12 (740AB); cf. ibid. 5 (729D).
(7) ὡς εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν.
(8) 1 *Dorm.* 11 (717A).
(9) 2 *Dorm.* 14 (96, 740D).
(10) "For I shall ask you: How is [it that] the corpse is invisible? Why are the shrouds not in the coffin, unless what was entombed has fled corruption; unless the treasure has been transported?" *Hom. in Dorm.* II, PG 97, 1081D and 1084A.

Mary's Assumption. His argument is indirect. He asks the tomb to give an account of the precious treasure committed to its custody. The tomb, alleging its impotence in the presence of the divine commands, confesses that the sacred body was taken away in the company of the heavenly choirs.

The reasons of propriety which our author gives in favor of the Assumption are the same as those which we put forward to-day. He shows how entirely fitting it was that the holy Virgin's body should immediately be taken up to heaven; how repugnant corruption is to her all-pure nature. His words are clear and need no commentary.

In the first homily on the Dormition, the holy Doctor treats the question only in passing, showing that the perpetual virginity calls for the eternal incorruption of the Virgin's body. The body was placed into the tomb, but it did not see corruption: "For the body of her whose virginity remained intact in childbirth, having departed this life, is kept incorrupt and is transferred to a better and a more divine abode not interrupted by death, but enduring through endless generations." As the sun is eclipsed by the moon for a short space of time, and then reappears in all its brightness, so Mary's body was hidden by death, but soon reappeared in a new splendor, for she is the very Source of Life and Light. (1)

In the first part of the second homily, St. John says that if our first parents lost Paradise because of sin,

(1) 1 *Dorm.* 10 (716BC).

Mary, who was sinless must not be excluded from it. "Today the spotless Virgin who held no intercourse with earthly passions, but was nourished by heavenly thoughts, did not return to earth, but, being the Animated Heaven, dwells in the heavenly tabernacles." (1) What is this, if not the argument from the Immaculate Conception ?

Farther on in the same homily, insisting on the contrast between Eve and Mary, the holy preacher continues : "Will not Paradise now receive her who overcame the assault of every vice, who brought forth the germ of obedience of God the Father, and who was the beginning of life to the whole race ? Will not heaven, rejoicing, throw open its gates ? Most assuredly... Eve listened to the message of the serpent... and with Adam was condemned to death, and placed on the depths of Hades. (2) But how should death swallow up the truly most blessed one who inclined her ear to the Word of God, was filled with the power of the Spirit, and made pregnant by the good pleasure of the Father [announced] by the archangel ; who, without pleasure and intercourse, conceived the hypostasis of the Word of God ; who fittingly bore without pain and was wholly united to God ? How can Hades admit her ? How can corruption affront the body which received Life ? These things are opposed to her and entirely foreign to her God-bearing soul and body... She did not tread the gloomy descents to Hades, [but] a straight and smooth road easy to follow was prepared for her. For if Christ, who is Life and Truth, said : 'Where I am, there also shall

(1) 2 *Dorm.* 2 (725B).
(2) Hades, that is, Limbo.

my minister be', (1) how much more will not His Mother dwell with Him ?" (2)

Finally, having pictured to his hearers the circumstances of Mary's death, St. John insists at length on the reasons for Mary's Assumption. Her virginity, her relations with the Father and the Son, and the positive will of her Divine Son show its propriety. After three days, the holy Virgin's body was transferred to the heavenly mansions, "for it was fitting that this divine Dwelling, the undug Fountain of the Water of forgiveness,... the unwatered Vine of the Immortal Grape, the evergreen and richly laden Olive of the paternal Mercy, should not be confined in the hollows of the earth; but as the holy and untainted Body which was taken from her and hypostatically united to the Word of God was raised up from the tomb on the third day, so also should she be rescued from the tomb, and [as] Mother, be carried up to her Son; so that, as He had come down to her, so she whom He loved exceedingly should be borne up to a better and more perfect tabernacle, to heaven itself. It was fitting that she who had harbored the Word of God in her womb, should dwell in the tabernacles of her Son; and just as the Lord said that He had to be about His Father's business, (3) so it was fitting that His Mother should dwell in the palaces of her Son, in the house of our God. (4) For if the dwelling of all who rejoice is

(1) John 12, 26.
(2) 2 *Dorm.* 3 (728AC).
(3) Luke 2, 49.
(4) Ps. 13, 21.

there, (1) where [is the abode] of the Cause of joy ? It was fitting that the body of her whose virginity was preserved intact in childbirth should be kept incorrupt also after death. It was fitting that she who bore the Creator in her arms as a Babe, should dwell in the divine tabernacles. It was fitting that the Bride whom the Father espoused should abide in the heavenly bridal chambers. It was fitting that she who looked upon her crucified Son, and then received in her heart the sword of sorrow which she had escaped in childbirth, should see Him seated with the Father. It was fitting that the Mother of God should possess what belongs to her Son, and be worshipped by all creation as the Mother and handmaid of God. The inheritance (2) always descends from the parents to the children, but now, as some learned man has said, the sources of the holy rivers flow upwards, for the Son has subjected all creation to His Mother." (3) Has a more eloquent description of the propriety of Mary's Assumption ever flowed from the pen of any Father ?

It may be asked whether the Damascene uses any Scriptural arguments to establish Mary's Assumption. Not directly. The holy Virgin is repeatedly called the Ark of the Lord, but no particular mention is made of its incorruptibility. (4) The Scripture texts which are cited rather

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(1) Cf. Ps. 86, 7.

(2) St. Modestus also says that Jesus made His Mother His heir. *Encomium in B. Virg.* 5, PG 86bis, c. 3289C.

(3) 2 *Dorm.* 14 (740D and 741).

(4) Msgr. RENAUDIN cites a series of figures from the first homily on the Dormition to show that St. John Damascene saw the As-

show the propriety of the Assumption than prove its necessity. For example, he says: "For if Christ, the Life and the Truth, said: 'Where I am, there also shall my minister be', (1) how much more will not His Mother dwell with Him?" (2) So also, having described Mary's ascent to the heavenly Jerusalem, our author applies to the Mother the words which the Psalmist spoke of the Son: "Your soul did not go down into hell, nor did your flesh see corruption." (3) In no case is the inspired Word adduced as foretelling the immediate glorification of the holy Virgin's body.

A final question remains to be considered: Mary's place in heaven. The celestial hosts had come to witness the last moments of the Mother of their Lord. When earth's last ties were broken, the angels "formed a guard for the all-holy and immaculate soul, accompanying it in its ascent to heaven, until they placed the Queen beside the royal throne." (4)

United with her Son in life, Mary remains united with Him after death. "The angels together with the archangels carried you... Heaven rejoicing, received your soul... The King introduced you into His chamber where the powers

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sumption prefigured in the Old Testament. It seems, however, that the Doctor of Damascus has introduced this long series of figures into this homily only to show the greatness of the Virgin Mother, for they all refer to the divine maternity and to the perpetual virginity. His argument for the Assumption is then based on these two privileges. (*La Doctrine de l'Assomption de la T. S. Vierge*, Paris, 1913, p. 149).

(1) John 12, 26.

(2) 2 *Dorm.* 3 (728C).

(3) Cf. Ps. 15, 10; 1 *Dorm.* 12 (720A).

(4) τῷ θρόνῳ... παρέστησαν. 2 *Dorm.* 11 (737A).

are your body-guard... the cherubs rejoice in amazement, the seraphs glorify you who [by your part] in the Incarnation,... became the Mother of their Lord... For you did not, like Elias, only seem to ascend to heaven; nor were you, like Paul, transferred to the third heaven, but you went up to the very royal throne of your Divine Son, looking upon Him with your own eyes, rejoicing, and standing in His presence with a great and unspeakable freedom of speech. (1) You are the ineffable joy of the angels and of all supercosmic powers, the unending happiness of the patriarchs, the indescribable satisfaction of the just," in a word, the delight of all in heaven, and the blessing, hope and solace of all on earth. (2)

If, in the homily on the Nativity, St. John does not show us the child Mary dwelling in the Holy of Holies of the temple, he no longer hesitates to show her to us in the innermost mansions of the heavenly Jerusalem. Jesus, "by means of the angels, introduced her soul into the Holy of Holies, the true and celestial prototype,... and placed her beside His throne, (3) beyond the veil where Christ Himself, her Forerunner, (4) had entered corporeally." (5)

The Damascene delights in the thought of the holy Virgin's sublime elevation; in the third homily on the Dormition, he shows her to us above all the choirs of Angels. "Let us enter [the tomb] to venerate it, and let

(1) παῤῥησία.
(2) 1 *Dorm.* 11 (716D and 717AB).
(3) τῷ ἑαυτοῦ παρεστήσατο θρόνῳ.
(4) πρόδρομος.
(5) 2 *Dorm.* 12 (740A).

us understand the strangeness of the mystery; how she was taken away, how she was raised up, how she was carried off to heaven, how she stands beside her Son above all the choirs of angels for there is no midway between the Mother and the Son." (1) If Mary has been placed at the side of Jesus, it is because she is the Queen of angels and men, and as such, "manifestly rules with her Son and God." (2)

In concluding, we may say that, whilst St. John Damascene did not consider the details of Mary's death and burial well grounded from a historical viewpoint, he firmly believed in the reality of her bodily Assumption, and tried to prove it by nearly all the arguments of propriety which are presented by the theologians of the present day. However, since the Church had not defined anything concerning this doctrine, and since the Fathers did not speak without hesitation, (3) he does not mention it in *De Fide Orthodoxa*, nor in any writing which does not directly deal with the feast of the Dormition.

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(1) 3 *Dorm.* 5 (761B).
(2) 3 *Dorm.* 2 (756B).
(3) See ST. MODESTUS, *Encomium in B. Virginem* I, PG 86bis c. 3280B; ST. ANDREW OF CRETE, *Hom. in Dorm.* III, PG 97, 1089C.

CHAPTER VII

MARY'S MEDIATION:

COREDEMPTION AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF GRACE

THE mediation of the "one Mediator of God and man, the Man Christ Jesus," (1) is twofold: He acquired grace and reconciliation for the whole human race by the accomplishment of the work of our Redemption, and He now freely dispenses these heavenly favors to all men. The mediation of the Mother of God resembles that of her Divine Son. She freely cooperated in the acquisition of the benefits which she now so generously distributes to all mankind. From the earliest centuries, the Fathers have seen the Virgin Mother associated with her Son in the mystery of the Redemption. (2) It was not long before they drew the natural conclusion from this inseparable union, and began to ask all manner of favors from her, and to attribute to her all the graces bestowed upon men. (3) This chapter, therefore, naturally divides itself into two

(1) 1 Tim. 2, 5.

(2) See NEUBERT, *op. cit.* pp. 238-254.

(3) See, for example, ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: *Homilia IV, Ephesi in Nestorium habita, quando septem ad Sanctam Mariam descenderunt:* PG 77, c. 992-996.—M. BOVER, S.J., *St. Ephrem, Doctoris Syri testimonia de Universali B. Mariae V. Mediatione. Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses.* T. IV, April 1927, pp. 161-179.

sections: first, Mary's cooperation in the Redemption; and secondly, her distribution of grace.

A. Cooperation in the Redemption

Faith teaches us that our Redemption was wrought by the saving death of Jesus upon the cross. This does not, however, exclude the theory (1) that our restoration began with the Incarnation, and that all the mysteries of our Saviour's life had a certain satisfactory value. This twofold aspect of the Redemption is found also in the writings of St. John Damascene. He teaches expressly that our salvation was wrought by the death on the cross: "Death was destroyed, our forefather's sin wiped out,... the gates of paradise were opened, our nature was placed at the right hand of God, and we were made children and heirs of God by nothing else than the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2) But in a consequent chapter of *De Fide Orthodoxa*, our author says: "Therefore, through His birth, that is, through His Incarnation, through His baptism, passion, and resurrection, He freed our nature from our forefather's sin, from death and corruption; He became the first fruits of the resurrection, and constituted Himself our way, our type and model, so that, following in His footsteps, we might become by adoption what He is by nature: sons and heirs of God,

(1) The mystic, or physical theory of the Redemption.
(2) FO iv, 11 (94, 1128D); cf. *Hom. in Transfig. Domini* 16 (96, 569C); *In ficum aref.* 3 (581C); FO iii, 27 (94, 1096C).

and joint heirs with Him." (1) The mystical theory of the Redemption is still more clearly expressed in the following passage of the second treatise in defense of sacred images: "But now, since divinity has been united to our nature like a life-giving and saving remedy, our nature has been glorified and restored to incorruptibility." (2) The Doctor of Damascus frequently repeats this doctrine in his homilies. For example, in the second homily on the Dormition, he says: "For the only-begotten Son of God Himself, being God, and consubstantial with the Father, made Himself man from this virgin and pure earth, and I, a man, was made divine; mortal, I became immortal;... having cast off corruption, I am clothed in a garment of divinity." (3) From all these citations it appears that the Damascene considered the Incarnation as the beginning of our restoration.

The holy Doctor did not fail to see the consequences which this conception of the Redemption entailed for the Mother of Jesus. In the first homily on the Dormition, having enumerated the benefits of the Incarnation, our author asks: "Who, therefore, was the workshop (4) of these countless gifts which surpass all understanding? Was it not the Ever-Virgin who bore You?" (5) The point of contact between the role of the Redeemer and that of His Mother is clearly expressed in this passage. If we admit that our restoration was begun by the In-

(1) FO iv, 13 (1137BC); cf. Rom. 8, 17. See above, pp. 29 and 30.
(2) *De Imag.* Or. II, 11 (94, 1296A).
(3) No. 2 (725AB).
(4) ἐργαστήριον.
(5) 1 *Dorm.* 3 (705A).

carnation, we must necessarily admit Mary's share in it, for she is inseparable from that mystery. (1) Hence the Damascene does not hesitate to call Mary "the workshop of our salvation", (2) "the beginning of life for the whole race", (3) "the source of the universal cure", (4) "the fountain of living water". (5)

In the Homily on the Nativity of our Lady, the Damascene tells us that Mary was born in order to cooperate in the work of the Redemption. "You will have a more excellent life than your nature warrants, but you will not have it for your own sake. Wherefore, you will have it for God, for whose sake you came into life; and for this reason you will cooperate to the utmost (6), in the salvation of the world, so that the ancient decision of God concerning the Incarnation of the Word and our deification

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(1) See GALTIER, S.J., *La Maternité de Grace dans St. Irénée. Mémoires et Rapports du Congrès Marial de Bruxelles*, 1921, T. 1, p. 44. He concludes as follows: "S'il est vrai que, par suite de la solidarité établie entre le Christ et les hommes, sa conception et sa naissance à lui, c'est déjà leur régénération à eux, il est vrai aussi, par suite, que la mère qui l'enfante les régénère. En devenant la mère du nouvel Adam, Marie engendre à la vie tous ceux qui la recouvrent en lui et par lui. Comme notre nature, par sa séparation de Dieu en Adam, était tombée dans le péché et dans la mort, elle renaît à la vie le jour où, dans le Christ, elle rentre en contact avec Dieu lui-même; et parce que cette *réunion* avec Dieu de la substance humaine issue du premier Adam s'accomplit au sein d'une femme, la femme dont a été tirée cette substance humaine, par le fait même qu'elle a ainsi conçu et enfanté l'homme nouveau, se trouve avoir régénéré tous ceux qui en lui retrouvent la vie."

(2) 3 *Dorm.* 5 (761A).
(3) 2 *Dorm.* 3 (728A).
(4) ἰάσεως. 1 *Nativ.* 11 (677C).
(5) 3 *Dorm.* 5 (761A).
(6) ἐξυπηρετήσεις.

may be fulfilled through you." (1) The Damascene expresses the same idea in different words when he says: "A Virgin is now born, the enemy of our ancestral fornication; she is espoused to God Himself and brings forth God's Mercy." (2)

The manner of Mary's cooperation in the mystery of the Incarnation has been described in a previous chapter. (3) It is by bringing forth God's eternal Son that she has "cooperated to the utmost" in God's saving designs. The Divine Maternity is, therefore, the basis of Mary's role as Coredemptrix.

The cooperation of the Blessed Virgin in the Redemption has been exemplified from the earliest times by contrasting her with Eve. (4) St. John (5) uses these contrasts as if they were known to all; he frequently refers to them, but rarely enters into a detailed exposition. Mary's action is the opposite of Eve's in every way, and consequently, she obtains divine blessings where Eve received a sentence of condemnation. The preacher of the homily on the Nativity calls upon us to celebrate the birthday of her "through whom Eve's sad plight was changed into joy. For the latter heard, through the divine sentence: 'In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children'; (6)

(1) 1 *Nativ.* 9 (676A).
(2) Ch. II, pp. 65-66.
(3) 1 *Nativ.* 8 (673B).
(4) See NEUBERT, *op. cit.*; BOVER, (*St. Ephrem*) loc. cit. supra; F. J. FRIEDEL, *op. cit.*, Part. II, pp. 183-212; TERRIEN, *op. cit.*, T. III, p. 3-23.
(5) See the excellent article of the Rev. AL. JANSSENS: *De Nieuwe Eva* (Naar den Hl. Joannes Damascenus), *De Standaard van Maria.* Vol. vi, (1926) pp. 1-7.
(6) Gen. 3, 16.

the former: 'Hail, full of grace'; (1) the latter: 'Thou shalt be under thy husband's power'; the former: 'The Lord is with thee'." (2)

The contrast which most clearly implies the coredemption is the following: "O daughter, worthy of God, the beauty of human nature, the amendment of our first Mother, Eve, for through your childbearing our fallen nature was again raised up! O most holy daughter, the ornament of women! For even if the first Eve was involved in a transgression, and if death came through her having served the serpent against our forefather, Mary on the contrary, obedient to the divine will, outwitted the deceitful serpent and brought incorruption into the world.(3)" It is the obedience of the Second Eve that "destroys the indictment against women". (4) Mary's cooperation in the Saviour's mission is, therefore, as direct as Eve's cooperation in our fall.

In the description of our Lady's death, the Damascene makes Adam and Eve address their dying daughter as follows: "Blessed art thou, Daughter, who didst take away our punishments. Having inherited a corruptible body from us, you brought forth a Garment of incorruptibility for us. You who received your being from our loins, gave us well-being (5) in return; you relieved our pains; you broke the bonds of death; you replaced us

(1) Luke 1, 28.
(2) 1 *Nativ.* 1 (661B); cf. 1 *Dorm.* 7 (709C); 2 *Dorm.* 3 (728AB); *Carmen in Theogoniam* (96, 820A).
(3) 1 *Nativ.* 7 (672BC).
(4) Ibid. 9 (673D).
(5) τὸ εὖ εἶναι.

into our former abode. We closed Paradise ; you reopened the way to the tree of life. Through us, from good things sorrows came ; through you, from sorrows greater benefits have come again. "[1] Here the reinstatement of our first parents is directly attributed to Mary.

The effects of Mary's cooperation with the Redeemer are not, however, limited to Adam and Eve. As has been noted above, she is the "Source of the universal cure." Her birthday is the "beginning of salvation for the whole world." [2] "For through her, the Creator changed all nature for the better through the medium of the human nature... Having united Himself to the human nature, through it, the Maker of the world, the Word of God was united to every creature." [3] Since Mary freely "supplied to the Creator" [4] the matter from which He formed His sacred body, her part in the restoration of "all nature" is real and direct. We can say without hesitation that "through her our reconciliation with [God] was wrought, and peace and grace were given us ; men rejoice together with the angels, and we who at first were despised have become the children of God... In her, God became man, and man, God." [5] Mary is "the rational Paradise of the New Adam in which our condemnation was done away with, in which the Tree of Life was planted, and in which our nakedness was covered." [6]

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(1) 2 *Dorm.* 8 (733CD).
(2) 1 *Nativ.* 6 (96, 669B).
(3) 1 *Nativ.* 1 (661C).
(4) FO iv, 14 (94, 1160C).
(5) 2 *Dorm.* 16 (774C).
(6) 2 *Dorm.* 2 (725A).

This cooperation of the Mother of God in the Incarnation is the first basis of her spiritual maternity. Father Janssens sums up this question as follows: "In so far as I know, the Damascene never calls the holy Virgin 'our Mother'. But if the title is wanting, the reality is not. What, indeed, do we mean when we call Mary our Mother? Primarily, that through her, we were brought forth as sons of God. But Mary bore the Son of God who is the beginning of our deification, of our participation in the divine filiation.

"In order to express this truth faithfully according to the spirit of the Damascene, we may reduce it to the following words: the human race fell in Adam, through Eve; it was reinstated and redeemed in Christ, through Mary. In both cases there is a cooperation. Mary is, therefore, as truly our Mother according to the supernatural life as Eve is our mother according to sin, although we inherited sin directly from Adam." (1)

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The Damascene saw Mary's mediation in the accomplishment of our Redemption foreshadowed in Jacob's ladder, a figure which he loves to recall. In the homily on the Nativity he says: "Today the Son of the carpenter... prepared an animated Ladder for Himself, whose base is set upon the earth, but whose upper part [reaches] the very heavens (2); God rested upon it; Jacob saw its fig-

(1) *De Nieuwe Eva*, Loc. cit., pp. 4-5.
(2) πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν.

ure; God descended by it without change, or rather, having lowered Himself, was seen upon earth and conversed with men... The Spiritual Ladder, the Virgin, is firmly set upon the earth, for she is born of the earth; but her head reaches heaven. The head of every woman is man, but of her who knew not man, God the Father acted as head." (1) The preacher then proceeds to describe the Incarnation of the Word through the Father's good pleasure and the cooperation of the Holy Ghost. The ladder is the means of God's coming to us. If our author rather considers its extremities in the above cited homily, he expressly describes its mediatory office in the first homily on the Dormition. At the end of a long series of figures of the Mother of God, (2) he thus recalls his favorite one: "Jacob's ladder nearly escaped my mind. But why? Is it not evident to all that it prefigured you?... As he [Jacob] saw heaven joined to the earth by the extremities of the ladder, and angels descending and ascending by it, and the truly Strong and Invincible typically contending with him, so you also acted as mediatrix, (3) having become the Ladder of God's descent to us. When He assumed our weak nature, (4)... you brought the separated parts together." (5)

From the above considerations, it is evident that the Damascene assigns to Mary an active part in obtaining for us the benefits of the Incarnation, so much so, in fact,

(1) 1 *Nativ.* 3 (665B).
(2) See above, pp. 66-67.
(3) μεσιτεύσασα.
(4) φύραμα.
(5) 1 *Dorm.* 8 (712D, 713A); cf. 3 *Dorm.* 2 (753D).

that He attributes these benefits indifferently to her or to her divine Son. He also speaks of her compassion with Jesus on Calvary, without, however, in any way stressing its relation to our Redemption. (1) Death did not separate the holy Virgin from the side of Jesus, since, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, she now rules together with Him in the celestial kingdom. In the following section we shall see the happy consequences for us of this inseparable union.

B. Mary's Distribution of Grace

Although the question of the universal distribution of all graces through Mary was not known to the Greek Fathers of the seventh and eighth centuries in the terms which we employ at present, an examination of the Marian homilies (2) of that period shows that the doctrine itself had already advanced very far. (3) St. John Damascene is, on this point, as on so many others, the faithful echo of his predecessors.

Before considering the extent of Mary's mediation in the distribution of grace, we shall expose the bases on which

(1) See Ch. V A, p. 129.

(2) See the Marian homilies of St. Modestus, St. Sophronius, St. Andrew of Crete, and St. Germanus of Constantinople.

(3) M. Jugie, in his introduction to the two homilies of St. Euthymius, patriarch of Constantinople (A.D. 902-912) says: "A l'époque d'Euthyme, cette doctrine sur la médiation universelle de Marie à l'égard des hommes était déjà *un lieu commun* de la théologie byzantine." Graffin et Nau, *Patrologia Orientalis*. Paris, 1922, T. xvi, p. 482.

her power with God rests and the manner of its exercise.

Modern theologians say that the Coredemptrix, since she cooperated in the acquisition of grace for all men, must have a share in its distribution. (1) We have seen in the preceding pages, how strongly the Damascene emphasizes Mary's cooperation in the work of the Redemption. In practice, he draws the same conclusions from it that we do. When Mary became the Mother of the Redeemer, she became "the mediatrix (2) of all good things for us." (3) At her death, the apostles were gathered together to receive her last blessing as a most precious inheritance: "For who would doubt that she is the Source of benediction and the Fountain (4) of all good things" (5) It has already been noted that our author in his homily on the Nativity always speaks of Mary as the Mother of God, and hence he says that St. Anne "brought forth for the world an unfailing treasury of good things." (6)

It would seem, indeed, that St. John attributes such a fullness of grace to Mary that her own grace is a sufficient explanation of the favors she grants. She not only found grace with God, but in bearing the very Author of grace, she "gathered a most prolific ear of grace"—she "found the abyss of grace." (7) In the Canon on the Dormition

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(1) J. BITTREMIEUX, *op. cit.*, p. 159.
(2) Αὕτη πάντων τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἡμῖν προμνήστρια γέγονεν.
(3) 2 *Dorm.* 16 (744C).
(4) ἀνάβλυσις.
(5) Ibid. 6 (732B).
(6) 1 *Nativ.* 1 (661C).
(7) Supra, p. 134; 1 *Dorm.* 7 (709B).

the Damascene prays: "Cover us with *your* shining divine grace". (1) If the tomb's participation in Mary's grace (2) was capable of working all kinds of miracles, the Mother of God's share in the Redeemer's grace must have been unlimited. The holy Doctor exposes this thought in the following beautiful comparison which refers to Mary's death and subsequent Assumption: "As the all-brilliant and ever-shining sun is hidden for a short time by the mass of the moon, and seems, in a way, to fail, to be overcast with gloom and to interchange shadow with light, nevertheless, it is not deprived of its own light, but has within itself an inexhaustible source of light [ever] shining, or rather, it is itself a source of unfailing light, as God, who created it, has ordained. So you also, the everlasting Source of true Light, the liberal (3) Treasury of self-subsisting Light, the plentiful Stream of blessing, the cause and mediatrix (4) of all good gifts to us, even if you were corporeally hidden by death for a short interval of time, you produce for us profusely a continual, pure and easily approachable stream of unfailing light, of divine life, of true happiness—rivers of grace, well-springs of healing and unending blessing." (5) It is "the Treasury of Life, the Abyss of grace" (6) who has been touched by death, but death has not been able to stop the stream of graces which emanates from her.

(1) σου χάριτι. *Canon in Dorm.* 9 (96, 1368A).
(2) Treated below.
(3) ἀδάπανος.
(4) αἰτία καὶ πρόξενος.
(5) 1 *Dorm.* 10 (716BC). BITTREMIEUX, *op. cit.*, p. 206, cites this passage in favor of a universal mediation on Mary's part.
(6) 2 *Dorm.* 2 (725C).

The Damascene has indicated his guiding principle in the second homily on the Dormition : the tomb has become an "unfailing source of cures", (1) because "the divine gifts are truly without repentance. (2) I [the tomb] have received the Fountain of joy, and have been enriched by its perennial flow." (3) In other words, as Mary, in accordance with the divine plan, gave us the greatest of all graces, the Redeemer from whom all graces come, so she continues to bestow divine favors upon men from her superabounding participation in His grace. That this is a faithful expression of our author's thought appears from every page of his homilies.

A second reason, or basis, of the Blessed Virgin's power with God is her dignity as Queen of all created things. This dignity, as may be seen in the passages previously cited, (4) is a direct consequence of her Divine Maternity. A single passage may be added here as illustrative of the others. It is taken from the second homily on the Dormition. "May she who is worthy of praise, be merciful to us—she who surpasses all creatures and who rules (5) all created things as Mother of the Creator and Maker, who rules all things." (6)

Mary is not a Queen without resources. When she entered the celestial kingdom on the day of her Assumption, Jesus gave her a share in His own infinite riches and

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(1) 2 *Dorm.* 17 (745B).
(2) Cf. Rom. 11, 29.
(3) 2 *Dorm.* 17 (745D).
(4) Above, p. 76 and 77.
(5) δεσπόζουσα.
(6) 2 *Dorm.* 1 (721D).

power. He addressed her as follows: "You shared your goods with me, come and partake of what is mine. Come, Mother, and reign with Him who was born of you, and suffered poverty with you." (1) Terminating the long series of reasons of propriety for the Assumption, our author had previously said: "It was fitting that the Mother of God should possess the things which are her Son's,... For indeed, the inheritance always devolves from the parents to the children, but now,... the sources of the holy streams flow upwards, for the Son has subjected all creation to His Mother." (2) As Mother of God, therefore, Mary possesses infinite riches; associated in her Divine Son's rule, she must necessarily share in the distribution of those riches if her title of Queen is not to be made void.

This conclusion is strengthened by the Damascene's insistance on our Lady's goodness. "She who is the truly good Mistress, the Mother of the only good God whose condescension is infinite," will accept our offerings and "repay them with incomparable gifts." (3) Toward the end of the same homily, the holy preacher repeats this prayer: "Look upon us, O good Mistress, Mother of the good Master." (4) In practice, as we shall see shortly, our author does not hesitate to ask any favor whatsoever from the Mother of Jesus.

Whilst St. John insists at length on Mary's maternal prerogatives, he is almost silent about her power of in-

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(1) 3 *Dorm.* 4 (760B).
(2) 2 *Dorm.* 14 (741B).
(3) 1 *Dorm.* 2 (701B).
(4) 1 *Dorm.* 14 (721B).

tercession. He contemplates her union with Jesus; he admires her freedom of speech in His presence, but he seems to deem her intercession for us almost unnecessary. The holy Virgin "stands in the presence of her Divine Son above all the ranks of the angels, for there is no midway (1) between the Mother and the Son." (2) Elsewhere our author says: "You went up to the very throne of your Divine Son,... standing in His presence with a great and unutterable freedom of speech." (3) Mary's very place in heaven is that of a mediatrix, (4) but in the exercise of her office, it is not necessary for her to use her liberty of speech to ask favours for us, for heaven's riches have been placed at her disposal, and she can dispense them as she wishes.

The intercessory power of the Saints is not unknown to the Doctor of Damascus. In the chapter of *De Fide Orthodoxa* devoted to the honor due to the saints and their relics, the Damascene says: "Through them every good gift comes down from the Father of Lights to those who ask with an unfaltering faith." (5) And immediately afterwards he asks: "Are not they who are the patrons of the whole race to be honored—they who make intercession (6) for us with God?" Applying this doctrine to a

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(1) μέσον.
(2) 3 *Dorm.* 5 (761B).
(3) παῤῥησία. 1 *Dorm.* 11 (717A).
(4) Mary's position above all creatures, but below God, is clearly expressed in the above passages, as well as in the numerous citations found in the last section of Chapter 2. BITTREMIEUX calls this position "ontological mediation". (*Op. cit.*, pp. 8-13).
(5) FO iv, 15 (94, 1165B); cf. James 1, 17.
(6) ἐντεύξεις.

particular case, he asks for spiritual and temporal favors "through the prayer and intercession" (1) of St. Barbara, in whose honor he has just preached a feastday sermon. (2) But as regards the Blessed Virgin, a single text has been noted in which the Damascene asks her intercession, and even then it is accompanied by a reference to the saints in general. The passage, which appears in the conclusion of the *Expositio Fidei*, is the following: "I do not expect to be justified by my works, but by faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, and through His mercy, through the intercession of the Mother of God and of all the saints and through your prayers." (3)

Summing up the bases of Mary's power to help us, we may say that in giving us Jesus, she has obtained all graces for us, and like an inexhaustible fountain, she continues to bestow them on us; that Jesus, in His turn, has subject-

(1) διὰ τὴν πρεσβείαν καὶ ἔντευξιν.

(2) *Laud. S. Barbarae* 23 (96, 813C).

(3) *Exp. Fidei* xiii (95, 436B).—We may here note two other passages referring to Mary's intercession, which, unhappily, are both found in works listed as doubtful or unauthentic. The first is found in the doubtful *Homilia in Annuntiationem:* "O tu Maria, cujus non repellitur intercessio, nec recusatur oratio, quæ simplici divinitati proxima es; propius ad Trinitatem sanctam accedens... per te... auxilium ad bona opera facienda consequamur." If this superb passage is truly from the pen of the Doctor of Damascus, how is it that he is silent on the question in all the authentic homilies? Its very presence in this homily is rather an argument against the authenticity of the work.

The second passage referred to is the θεοτόκιον of Ode X: (96, 1377B). *Ne lugeas super me.* It is conceived as follows: "Te, sanctissima Virgo, honorandam legatam optimamque mediatricem (μεσιτείαν) præmitto libenter ad Filium de te genitum, teque supplico, plurimos lapsus meos et peccata materna intercessione tua omnino dele." This would also be an excellent testimony in favor of Mary's intercession.

ed all creation to His Mother's power and placed His infinite treasures at her free disposal; that, consequently, although Mary enjoys an inconceivable liberty of speech, or intercessory power, with her Divine Son, it is not necessary for her to have recourse to this means, since, as Mother of God and Queen of all created beings, she may act, as it were, by her own authority. We shall now consider how generously she uses her power in favor of her devout clients.

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If Mary is the "mediatrix of all good things for us" (1) she must not only have acquired grace for us, but she must dispense it. The Damascene does not hesitate to call her the "dispensatrix of favors, the giver of riches." (2) That the holy Virgin fulfilled this office toward the infant Church of Jerusalem seems to be implied in the anxiety of the faithful and the apostles to have her stay with them. (3) But it is after her death that her mission really began. The bed on which her sacred body rested became a participant in her miraculous power. Those who embraced the holy Tabernacle itself "were filled with holiness and blessing by the touch." (4)

But it is the tomb which, above all the other objects that came into contact with Mary's body during its brief separation from her soul, shared most abundantly in her

(1) 2 *Dorm.* 16 (744C).
(2) ἀγαθοδότιν... πλουτοδότειραν. 1 *Dorm.* 3 (701C).
(3) 2 *Dorm.* 8 (733D).
(4) 2 *Dorm.* 11 (737A).

power of working miracles. "Just as, when someone places a rich perfume (1) in garments or in [any] place, and then takes it away, a part of its good odor remains even after its removal, so now also, the divine, holy and all-innocent body which is filled with a divine fragrance, the inexhaustible fountain of grace, having been placed in the tomb and then taken away to a better and a higher place, did not leave the tomb without honor, but gave it a share in its fragrance and grace, and left it a source of cures and of all good things to those who approach it with faith." (2) It is thus that the saintly preacher speaks in the first homily on the Dormition. In the second homily preached on the same day he enters into details concerning the power which the tomb acquired.

Having been asked to account for the precious treasure which was confided to it, the Tomb replies: "The holy and pure body left the winding-sheets, and after it had given me a share in its holiness, and having filled me with perfume and fragrance, and made me a sacred place, it was taken away, guarded by the angels and archangels and by all the heavenly powers. Now angels surround me. Now divine grace dwells within me. I have appeared as a pharmacy of easy access to the sick. I am the perennial source of cures. I am the defeat of demons. I am a city of refuge to those who fly to me. Approach with faith, ye people, and draw a stream of favors. Come all whose faith does not waver. 'All you that thirst, come to the

(1) μύρον.
(2) 2 *Dorm.* 11 (737A).
(3) 1 *Dorm.* 13 (720B).

waters', Isaias exclaimed, 'and you that have no money, make haste and buy without any price'. (1) I proclaim the good tidings to all: whoever thirsts for the cure of diseases, deliverance from the evil passions of his soul, cleansing from sins, preservation from all manner of calamity, the tranquillity of the kingdom of heaven, approach me with faith and you will obtain a stream of most efficacious and useful grace. For as the action of water, as well as that of earth, air, and of the resplendent sun, is simple and [determined to produce] one effect, yet it is variously changed according to the nature of the thing which partakes of [these elements], and becomes wine in the grape and oil in the olive; so also grace, though simple and [determined] to one effect, affects its participants variously in proportion to their individual needs. I have not acquired this grace from my own nature... I have received a precious perfume and partaken of its fragrance; this perfume is so sweet and efficacious that at the first approach it gives an imperishable participation, for the divine gifts are truly without repentance; I was host to the Fountain of joy, and have been enriched with its perennial flow." (2) Note the unlimited power which the tomb enjoys as a consequence of its participation in Mary's grace.

The tomb's concluding words tell the secret of the universal power of Mary's grace: the divine gifts are without repentance. In conceiving the Redeemer, she received a grace of infinite efficacy, of which she kept a generous

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(1) Is. 55, 1.
(2) 2 *Dorm.* 7 (746BCD).

share. Being the "good Mistress", she gives freely to all those who express the least desire.

St. John himself makes the comparison between the power of the tomb and that of the Mother of God whence it was derived. "What shall we answer the tomb ? Your grace is perennial and unfailing, but neither is the divine power, nor are the benefits of the Mother of God confined to places ; for if they were confined to the tomb alone, they would be asked for by few. But now they are abundantly distributed in all parts of the world." (1) Mary's grace, therefore, is limited neither in regard to the effects it can produce, nor by any consideration of time or place : in principle, she can be the universal mediatrix. The above passage implies that she is such in fact ; the Damascene's petition for all manner of graces confirms this conclusion.

In concluding his Marian homilies, our holy preacher ordinarily addresses a veritable litany of petitions to the Mother of God. These series of graces are both temporal and spiritual ; they include the cure of diseases and preservation from calamities, as well as holiness of life, freedom from temptation, and eternal salvation. Thus, for example, he concludes the homily on the Nativity by asking the holy Virgin to receive the sermon of her sinful servant who considers her as his "only hope of joy, the guardian of his life, his reconciler with her Divine Son and the sure pledge of salvation. (2) Free him, "he continues, "from the burden of his sins and the cloud which

(1) 2 *Dorm.* 19 (752B).
(2) σωτηρίας ἀῤῥαβῶνα στερέμνιον.

overshadows his mind,... suppress his temptations, rule his life [so as to make it] happy, lead him by the hand to the happiness above, and bestow peace upon the world; to all the orthodox inhabitants of this city grant perfect happiness and eternal salvation through the prayers (1) of your parents and of all those who are now in this church." (2) It may be noted that these favors are not asked for through Mary's intercession, but directly. This is true for nearly all the Damascene's requests to the Mother of God.

The first homily on the Dormition concludes with the following prayer: "Look upon us, O good Mistress, Mother of the good Master. I desire that you guide and direct our affairs as you wish, that you repress the attacks of our most shameful passions and show us the way to the tranquil harbor of the divine will, and that you make us worthy of future happiness, of the sweetness and of the splendor of the face of the Word of God who was made flesh of you." (3)

As a final instance, we shall cite the concluding prayer of the third homily on the Dormition. It forms a fitting conclusion to the series of sermons which the Damascene had preached on that day. "Grant us salvation, detachment from the evil passions of our souls, health from bodily ills, deliverance from perils, tranquillity of life, illumination of the spirit; inflame our love for your Son, make our lives pleasing to Him, so that we may obtain happiness beyond

(1) λιταῖς.
(2) 1 *Nativ.* 12 (680B).
(3) 1 *Dorm.* 14 (721B).

[the grave], and, seeing you resplendent in the glory of your Son, we may sing sacred hymns and rejoice for ever." (1)

Angels and men, the saints in heaven as well as the wayfarers on earth, are indebted to the Blessed Virgin in one way or other. Having described her Assumption into heaven where she reigns with her Divine Son, the Damascene thus addresses her: "You are the ineffable joy of the angels and of all supercosmic powers, the unending happiness of the patriarchs, the indescribable satisfaction of the just, the perennial exultation of the prophets; you are she who blesses the earth and sanctifies all things; you are rest to the weary, solace to the sorrowing, cure to the sick, a port to the storm-beaten, pardon to sinners, a gracious consolation to those in grief, a prompt aid to all who ask." (2) Mary's mediation extends itself to the angels in so far as her presence in heaven is to them the occasion of an increase of accidental glory. (3) The same, no doubt, is true for the saints, but Mary's relation to them is more direct.

Mary was the occasion of the delivery of the holy souls from Limbo, (4) and, if we may draw a conclusion from a single instance, she plays an important role in rewarding the saints who entered heaven after her. In the festal sermon in honor of St. Barbara, having described the

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(1) 3 *Dorm.* 5 (761C).

(2) αἰτοῦσιν. 1 *Dorm.* 11 (717A); cf. 2 *Dorm.* 16 (745A).

(3) Cf. BITTREMIEUX, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-234; B. M. Virgo, Mediatrix angelorum.

(4) If this is true for Adam and Eve, it must have been true for all the saints retained in Limbo. (2 *Dorm.* 8, c. 733C).

youthful virgin's triumph, the holy preacher says: "Delighted by your virtues, she [Mary] took you [Barbara] in her arms, placed you near to herself, made you share the highest honor and freedom of speech, and presented you before the royal throne." (1) Does the Mother of God fulfill a similar role for all the saints ?

For men, the Blessed Virgin is the source of the blessings they need—not of some only, but of all, as appears from the following words: "If, therefore, we energetically avoid... vice, and cultivate virtues most zealously, making [the latter] our companions, she will frequently visit her faithful servants, bringing with her the collection of all good things, (2) as also Christ, her Son, the King and Lord of all, who dwells within our hearts." (3)

If Mary can grant not only temporal blessings, but the greatest spiritual graces as well, such as freedom from temptation, the forgiveness of sin, the grace of regeneration, (4) enlightenment of the spirit, Christ Himself, and eternal salvation, we may conclude that St. John Damascene, teaches that Mary is the dispensatrix of all graces. This is the general impression which imposes itself upon the reader of our author's homilies. The question whether all graces do, in fact, come to us through her mediation is not treated *ex professo* in his writings. Neither is the power of mediation which he ascribes to the Blessed Virgin

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(1) *Laud. S. Barbarae* 20 (96, 809B).
(2) ἁπάντων τῶν ἀγαθῶν.
(3) 2 *Dorm.* 19 (752D).
(4) *Carmen in Theogoniam* (96, 826A).

an "omnipotentia supplex" (1) but it is rather the effect of a personal authority based on her Divine Maternity, on the superabundance of her grace, and on the positive will of Jesus. (2)

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(1) Suppliant omnipotence: the omnipotence of her intercession for us.

(2) Father JANSSENS arrived at the same conclusion: "Dat de Allerheiligste Maagd door haar voorbede heilsgaven voor de menschen verkrijgt, zal Damascenus wel zoo goed geweten hebben als wij. Maar dit is zeker niet de grondgedachte zijner leer over het actueel en voortdurend aandeel van Maria in de voltrekking van het verlossingswerk. Wat hij leert is m. i., dat O. L. Vrouw "de thesauro largitur illius gratiæ qua inde ab initio donata est plena copia a Deo" (Leo XIII, Enc. Magnæ Dei Matris, 7 Sept. 1892. Cavallera, Thesaurus, n. 813) of, zooals wij zeggen in de litanie, dat O. L. Vrouw is de Moeder der goddelijke genade." *De Standaard van Maria*, T. vi, p. 7: *De Nieuwe Eva.*

CHAPTER VIII

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

It is a well known fact that the Greek Churches, Orthodox as well as Uniate, are remarkable for their devotion to the Mother of God. (1) The council of Ephesus gave a great impulse to this devotion which caused it to grow in intensity in the course of the ages. Amongst the Greek Fathers, St. John of Damascus is conspicuous as an especial servant of Mary. Although his reputation in this regard may rest to a certain extent on the legendary story of the restoration of an amputated hand by his heavenly protectress, (2) it does not lack a solid basis in his writings. (3) And his writings are all the more weighty since his theological notions received a great precision from the active part he took in combating the imperial heresy of Iconoclasm.

In the following pages we shall examine the Damascene's doctrine concerning the cult which is offered to the saints in general, the cult which is due to the Mother of God in particular, and finally, the manifestations of devotion to Mary.

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(1) See FRIEDEL, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-359.

(2) See the introduction of this work, p. xviii.

(3) The life of St. John Damascene taken from the *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais is profuse in its description of our author's devotion to Mary. (PG 94, 497-500).

A. Cult of the Saints

The Damascene's definition of cult, or worship, is classic: "Worship is a sign of submission and respect." (1) Having thus described the nature of cult, the holy Doctor immediately proceeds to make the necessary distinctions: "We know of various kinds [of worship]. The first is that of latria (2) which we offer to God alone, adorable in His nature. Then there is the honor which we show to His friends and servants for the sake of God,... as Jesus, the son of Nawe [i.e., Josue] and Daniel adored the angel." (3) Here we have the essential distinction between a cult which is rendered to God alone, latria, and a cult which is offered to God's creatures, dulia, although the latter term is not employed.

Our apologist takes frequent occasion to make this difference clear, in order to refute the accusation of idolatry flung at the faithful by the followers of the Isaurian. "Abraham worshiped (4) the sons of Emor,... Jacob worshiped Esau, his brother;... he worshiped indeed, but not with the cult of latria. (5) Josue... and Daniel worshiped the angel of God, but not with the cult of latria. For the cult of latria is one thing, the cult of honor (6) which we offer to those above us in some dignity, is another." (7)

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(1) Ἡ προσκύνησις ὑποπτώσεως καὶ τιμῆς ἐστι σύμβολον.
(2) τὴν κατὰ λατρείαν.
(3) *De Imag.* I (94, 1244A); Ibid. III, 27 (94, 1348D).
(4) προσεκύνησε.
(5) ἐλάτρευσε.
(6) τιμῆς.
(7) *De Imag.* I, 8 (94, 1240B).

The expression of our cult of God and of the saints, may, at times, be identical, but the basic distinction between the Creator and creature must always be carefully safeguarded. "In a word, fear, affection, honor, are the signs of worship, as well as submission and humility; but we must worship no one as God, save only Him who is God by nature; to everyone his due is to be rendered because of the Lord." (1)

If the honor shown to God's saints needs a justification, the preceding words have indicated its basis: they are honored "because of the Lord." In *De Fide Orthodoxa*, our author wrote: "The saints must be honored as the friends of Christ, as the sons and heirs of God." (2) That they are really "friends, sons, heirs," is abundantly proven by the Holy Scriptures to which the Damascene has recourse. All that belongs to the Son of God is worthy of a particular cult—His passion and saving death, His image—the enumeration concludes as follows: "His servants, friends, and before all, the Theotokos, His Mother." (3)

We worship the saints, furthermore, as participants of the divine nature, for they, by a free choice, have become through grace what God is by nature. (4) By the indwelling of God in their hearts, they have become living temples of God, as the Apostle tells us. Finally, by ruling their passions, they have preserved intact the divine image in

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(1) *De Imag.* III, 40 (94, 1356C).
(2) FO iv, 15 (94, 1164A).
(3) *De Imag.* I (94, 1281D).
(4) *De Imag.* III, 3 (1352C).

the likeness of which they were created, and which is worthy of being duly honored." (1)

All the foregoing reasons for honoring the saints are based on their relation with God; their intercession for us, is another potent reason for rendering them the cult which is their due. In this life they walked in God's presence with a confidential freedom. Their familiarity has not decreased now that they are in the hand of God, in life and in light. They are not to be reckoned with the dead, "for how could a corpse perform miracles? How then, through them, are devils driven out, diseases cured, the sick healed, the blind made to see, lepers cleansed, temptations and afflictions dispelled; [how] does every good gift from the Father of lights descend on them who ask with an unfailing faith? (2) For what pains do you not take to find a patron to lead you to a mortal king, and offer your pleas to him? Are not, then, the patrons of all mankind who make intercession for us to be honored?" (3) If the gentiles honored their fabulous heroes, we should certainly be worthy of condemnation if we did not render homage to our benefactors in heaven. (4)

The cult rendered to the saints does not detract from the worship due to God, for, as we saw previously, we honor God's servants as belonging to Him. As a king is honored in his minister, and approachable through him, so is God honored in His saints and pleased to grant His

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(1) FO iv, 15 (94, 1164B).
(2) James, 1, 17.
(3) FO iv, 15 (94, 1165B).
(4) 1 *Dorm.* 4 (96, 705D).

blessings through them. (1) Commenting on an extract from St. Basil's sermon on the martyr Gordon, St. John asks us to note how "the commemoration of the saints is conducive to the glory of God, the honor of the saints, and the happiness and salvation of the people." (2)

The cult which we offer the saints should be both public and private. Our author does not, however, expressly make this distinction. He tells us that temples must be erected to God in the names of the Saints, gifts offered to them, their memories cherished. The servants are delighted by the same things by which God is honored. "Ye faithful, let us honor the saints by psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, by compunction of heart and mercy toward the poor, by which things God is especially honored. Let us raise monuments to them, and images which may be seen; let us ourselves become living reminders and images of them by the imitation of their virtues." (3)

To sum up in St. John's own words, the saints "are to be worshiped as glorified by God, as having, through God's [help], become an object of fear to their enemies, and the benefactors of those who approach them with faith. They are not to be worshiped as gods and benefactors by their very nature, but as servants and ministers of God and as possessing liberties in His regard because of their love towards Him." (4) The Damascene's doctrine on the cult due to the saints is the accepted teaching of the Church today.

(1) *De Imag.* III, 33 (94, 1352D).
(2) *De Imag.* I (94, 1265A).
(3) FO iv, 15 (94, 1165C; 1168A).
(4) *De Imag.* III, 33 (94, 1352C).

B. Cult Due to the Mother of God

As Mary is above all the angels and Saints in heaven, the Queen and Mistress of all created things, she deserves a worship corresponding to her dignity. "If the memory of all the saints is celebrated with panegyrics, who would not offer his praise to the Fountain of justice and Treasury of sanctity, not in order to glorify her, but that he may be glorified with an eternal glory?" (1) Mary has been glorified beyond all measure, and hence her glory cannot be increased by our praises, but by them we draw her attention and her blessings upon ourselves.

Our Lady is, indeed, the City of God about which glorious things have been said. How could we apply that name to any other than to her who bore the Incarnate God within her chaste womb? "Glorious things are said about her by the Lord Himself, for what is more glorious than to have received the Counsel of God?" (2)

Like a dutiful Son, Jesus glorified the death of His Mother by sending the heavenly hosts to minister unto her when she was dying, by gathering the apostles about her in a moment of time, and by coming Himself to receive her innocent soul. In heaven He subjected all things to her gentle rule, for "it is fitting that she be honored by all creation as the Mother and servant of God." (3) The angelic choirs, even the highest, delight in honoring Mary. (4)

(1) 1 *Dorm.* 1 (700A).
(2) 1 *Dorm.* 1 (700B).
(3) 2 *Dorm.* 14 (741B).
(4) 1 *Dorm.* 11 (717A).

Encouraged by such examples, the holy Doctor of Damascus, "moved by love [for Mary], forgets his own incapacity", and consecrates the first fruits of his preaching to the glory of the Mother of God. (1) It is true that no man, even if he had a thousand tongues, could praise her worthily, "because she surpasses all the laws of praise." (2) Not even the supercosmic mind of the angels can praise her as she deserves, (3) and yet the holy preacher was convinced that it was his duty to sing her praises.

The first homily on the Dormition is "gratefully offered to the Queen Mother, benefactress of all nature, as her due." (4) The same thought is repeated at the beginning of the second homily: "We well know that when we begin to praise [her] we pay off a debt, and having paid it, we become debtors again, so that the debt remains forever." (5) Not all are equally impressed by the contemplation of the glories of Mary, but "blessed are they who see, as it is most fitting to see; blessed are they that have understood." (6)

The worship which the Damascene would have us offer to the Blessed Virgin is more than the honor due to all the saints in general. It is a true cult of hyperdulia. As he does not use the term dulia, in his various writings, so neither has he the term hyperdulia, but he is certainly acquainted with the reality signified by that word.

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(1) 1 *Dorm.* 14 and 2 (721A, 701A); 2 *Dorm.* 1 (724B).
(2) 2 *Dorm.* 1 (721C).
(3) 1 *Dorm.* 2 (700B).
(4) 1 *Dorm.* 2 (701A).
(5) 2 *Dorm.* 1 (721C).
(6) 1 *Dorm.* 4 (705A).

Hyperdulia is not, properly speaking, a species of cult distinct from dulia; it is its highest degree based on a special motive; it is the most eminent act of dulia. (1) Whenever St. John speaks of the honor due to the saints, he places Mary in the first place and above them: they are the friends of God, she is His Mother; "there is an immeasurable (2) difference between the servants of God and His Mother." (3) "She alone has been honored above all creation." (4) Our devotion to Mary must show this difference. "Let us honor (5) the Theotokos as being really and truly the Mother of God." (6) In the epilogue to the treatise on the heresies, (7) our author says: "We honor and worship (8) the most holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary as the true Mother of God, and all the saints as His servants." Finally, the distinction is expressed still more clearly, if possible, in the third treatise on holy images: "Let us worship and offer the cult of latria to the Creator alone,... as to God adorable in His nature. Let us worship (9) the holy Theotokos also, not as God, but as the Mother of God according to the flesh. Let us, moreover, (10) worship the saints as the chosen friends of

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(1) See *Summa S. Thomae*, III, q. 25, ad 5; II II, q. 103, ad 4.
(2) ἄπειρον.
(3) 1 *Dorm.* 10 (716A).
(4) FO iii, 12 (94, 1032A).
(5) τιμήσωμεν.
(6) FO iv, 15 (94, 1168A); *Libellus Orthodoxiae* 10, *Damascenica*, p. [48]: τιμῶ καὶ προσκυνῶ. Compare ST. MODESTUS: *Encomium in B. Virginem* X, PG 86bis, c. 3304B.
(7) *De Haeres.* Epilogus (94, 780C).
(8) προσκυνῶν καὶ σεβόμενος.
(9) προσκυνήσωμεν.
(10) ἔτι.

God, who have acquired a great liberty of speech [1] in His regard." [2] The same distinctions are made when there is question of the cult to be paid to the images of Christ, of the Mother of God, and of the Saints. [3] Mary is in truth the "holy and animate Mountain" at which we should adore. [4] The cult which is her due, therefore, is of a higher order than that offered to all the saints—it is a true cult of hyperdulia.

The honor shown to the Mother does not detract from the worship due to the Son, for "the honor [shown] to her is referred to Him who was made flesh of her." [5] It is not, for all that, a mere relative worship, as is evident from the following animated lines taken from the concluding paragraph of the first homily on the Dormition. Having promised to honor his heavenly Queen to the best of his ability, since it is impossible to honor her as much as she deserves, the holy preacher continues: "For if, as holy Scripture teaches us, the honor shown to fellow servants shows good will toward the common master, how [is it possible] that the honor referred to you who bore the Lord should be slighted? Why should it not rather be ardently cherished? Why is she not to be preferred to the very breath of life [6]—she who is mediatrix [7] of life? For thus we show our good will toward

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(1) παῤῥησίαν.
(2) *De Imag.* III, 41 (94, 1357A).
(3) *De Imag.* I, 21 (1252D).
(4) Cf. Ps. 98, 9; *De Imag.* III, 34 (94, 1353C).
(5) FO iv, 15 (94, 1172B).
(6) αὐτῆς τῆς ἀναγκαίας προτιμωμένη πνοῆς.
(7) πρόξενος.

our own Master better. Why do I say toward the Master ? The very remembrance of you is a most precious gift fully sufficient for those who devoutly recall you. Its superabundance becomes an unfailing joy. With what happiness and gifts is he not filled who makes his mind the storehouse of your all-holy remembrance ?" (1)

The preceding citation indicates a final reason for honoring Mary: her power to help us. We have already seen the extent to which she dispenses God's gifts to men. The means of acquiring these gifts is our fidelity in honoring her. "She will certainly receive what we offer her as a debt [which we owe her], and she will repay beyond comparison." (2) In the following section we shall see the various forms under which devotion to Mary was practiced at the time of the Damascene.

C. The Practice of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin

The cult of our Lady may be public or private in so far as it is performed, or not, in the name of the Church, by her ministers, and in an approved way. Bearing this distinction in mind, we shall first consider those manifestations of a public cult to the Mother of God that are found in the Damascene's works.

Speaking of the saints in *De Fide Orthodoxa*, the Doctor of Damascus recommends the building of churches in their

(1) 1 *Dorm.* 14 (720D, 721A).
(2) 1 *Dorm.* 2 (701B).

honor. He gives us an example of such a dedication when he tells us in the homily on the Nativity that the Probatic house of Joachim has been transformed into "the most holy temple of the Mother of God." (1)

The celebration of feasts is an important act of public worship. References to three feasts in Mary's honor are found in the Damascene's authentic writings: namely, to the feasts of the Annunciation, of the Nativity, and of the Dormition. The first is not especially mentioned as a feast, but we have an acrostic from our author's pen which was certainly destined for the feast of the Annunciation. (2)

The homily delivered on the feast of the Nativity bears several direct references to the celebration of that feast. The holy preacher calls upon his hearers to "celebrate (3) the birthday of universal joy." (4) If the Greeks celebrate the birthdays of their kings, we have far more reason "to honor the birthday of the Mother of God... through whom Eve's sad plight was changed into joy." (5) Later on he says: "Let us institute a feast (6) in honor of the birth of the Mother of God." The Damascene preached the homily on the Nativity in the Probatic church, the place of Mary's birth.

St. John delivered three homilies dealing with Mary's

(1) 1 *Nativ.* 11 (677C); cf. Ch. I, pp. 12-13.
(2) In the doubtful homily on the Annunciation, the feast is called a solemnity "quæ cæterarum est solemnitatum princeps." (96, 646B; 643C).
(3) ἑορτάσωμεν.
(4) 1 *Nativ.* 1 (661B).
(5) Ibid.
(6) ἑορτήν.

Dormition, or Assumption. In the second he expressly mentions a "feast in honor of the departure of the Mother of God." (1) Similarly, in the third homily, he bids us "celebrate her holy and sacred departure." (2) Still, as has been noted in a previous chapter, (3) our author does not, in fact, separate the thought of Mary's death and burial from that of her Assumption.

The Dormition is a "public (4) feast of the Mother of God." (5) It is evident from the Damascene's homilies that, at his time, the celebration of the vigil of this feast took place during the night. (6) Perhaps this was true only for the monks of St. Sabas. It is to them that the holy Doctor preached his three homilies, as we may conclude from his addressing his audience as "fathers and brothers" (7), "the best of pastors", (8) "a holy and sacred assembly." (9)

In the first homily, the preacher refers to "the flashes of light [which] make the present night resplendent." (10)

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(1) 2 *Dorm.* 15 (741C).
(2) 3 *Dorm.* 1 (753C).
(3) Chapter VI.
(4) πάνδημον.
(5) *Canon in Dorm.* VI (96, 1365A).
(6) F. G. Holweck (*Catholic Encyclopedia: Eve of a Feast*) says, apropos of this question: "In the first ages, during the night before every feast, a vigil was kept. In the evening the faithful assembled in the place or church where the feast was to be celebrated and prepared themselves by prayers, readings from Holy Writ (now the offices of Vespers and Matins), and sometimes also by hearing a sermon."
(7) 1 *Dorm.* 4 (705A).
(8) 2 *Dorm.* 1 (721C).
(9) 3 *Dorm.* 1 (753A).
(10) 1 *Dorm.* 4 (705B).

The following exclamations are found in the first part of the second homily, after St. John's praise of Mary's glorious departure: "Now rejoice, ye heavens, and let the angels applaud; let the earth be glad and let men exult; now let the delighted air be filled with songs, and let sombre night be deprived of its gloomy and disagreeable darkness and splendidly imitate the brightness of day by flashes of fire." (1) Toward the end of the same homily, he recommends "stations lasting all through the night" (2) in Mary's honor. (3) The third homily is offered to the devout monks as a "salutary meat, profitable to the soul and suited to this holy night." (4) And amongst other recommendations for the celebration of the feast, the preacher again bids his hearers to "renew the saving day with the brightness of fire." (5)

The nocturnal celebrations which were performed with the greatest solemnity probably included a procession which may have terminated at the Virgin's tomb in Gethsemane. (6) The following words would certainly suggest a procession. "Let us sing a hymn to the departure of the Mother of God. Let Mary, (7) [that is], the Church, take the timbrel in her hands and intone the festal ode.

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(1) 2 *Dorm.* 3 (728D).
(2) παννύχοις.
(3) 2 *Dorm.* 16 (744B).
(4) 3 *Dorm.* 1 (753A).
(5) 3 *Dorm,* 3 (757B).
(6) The latter statement is deduced from 3 *Dorm.* 5 (761ABC).
(7) The reference is to Mary, the sister of Moses, who took a timbrel in her hand and intoned the Canticle of Moses in thanksgiving for the safe passage of the Red Sea and the overthrow of Pharao and his army. Cf. Exod. 15, 20; 2 *Dorm.* 16 (744D).

Let the maidens of the spiritual Israel go forth singing with joy to the accompaniment of timbrels. Let the kings of the earth, together with the judges and princes, the youths and virgins, the old together with the young sing hymns to the Mother of God; let those who have assembled [here, pronounce] all manner of sermons; let the various tongues of the nations and peoples compose a new song. Fill the air with [the sound of] flutes and trumpets, and renew the saving day with the brightness of fire." (1) This would indicate furthermore, that the Dormition was the principal of Mary's feasts at that time.

In connection with the feasts, the homilies which the Damascene delivered, constitute another act of public cult in Mary's honor. He says that it was "altogether necessary to preach a sermon, (2) as if to acquit himself of a debt." (3) Mary is, in fact so deserving of our praise that we would be inexcusable if we did not proclaim her glories and benefits. If the Greeks filled the panegyrics in honor of their dead with all kinds of fables and untruths because true merit was wanting, "would we not become the object of great laughter, and deserve the condemnation of the man who buried the talent, if we hid in deep silence, as the saying goes, what is most true and venerable, and what is, in fact, the means (4) of salvation and of every blessing to all?" (5)

(1) 3 *Dorm.* 3 (757AB).
(2) τὸ λέγειν.
(3) 1 *Dorm.*2 (701C).
(4) πρόξενα.
(5) 1 *Dorm.* 4 (705C).

Mary is especially delighted with verbal tributes: "What shall we offer to the Mother of the Word, but words? (1) For like is pleasing to like, especially when it is loved." (2) Besides the sermons delivered on Mary's glorious feasts, psalms and hymns were sung in her honor, and sacred odes recited. (3)

The cult of Mary's images, although ordinarily a matter of private devotion, may be added here because of the importance of this form of worship in the Greek Church. Our author always places Mary's image ahead of those of the saints, for it should be worshiped as "being that of the Mother of the Son of God." (4) He expresses his high esteem for Mary's image when he says, speaking of the burning bush which was a figure, or image, of the holy Virgin: "I do not only say that it is holy, but I do not hesitate to call it the holy of holies." (5)

The following example of the worship of an image of the Madonna and Child is twice cited by the Damascene in his treatises in defence of holy images. (6) On Mt. Olivet there dwelt an aged recluse who was frequently tempted by the devil of impurity. As his enemy pressed him more vehemently than usual one day, the old warrior asked when, finally, he would be left in peace. The devil

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(1) λόγον, i.e., a sermon.
(2) 2 *Dorm.* 1 (724B).
(3) 1 *Dorm.* 14 (720C).
(4) *De Imag.* I, 21 (94, 1252D); cf. *Libellus Orthodoxiae*, 18, *Damascenica*, p. [50].
(5) *De Imag.* II, 20 (94, 1308B); see above Ch. II, D, p. 79.
(6) The Damascene attributes this story to St. Sophronius; it is found, however, among the works of John Moschus, a friend of St. Sophronius, *Pratum Spirituale*, ch. xlv, PG 87 (III) c. 2900BC.

then appeared to him in corporeal form, and having exacted an oath of silence, promised to cease his infernal assaults immediately, if the servant of God would no longer worship the image of the Madonna and Child which he had in his cell. Troubled in conscience, the recluse related the whole story to the abbot Theodore Aeliotes. The latter heartily approved the exposure, telling his penitent that it would be better to be guilty of many sins of impurity than not to worship the Lord Jesus Christ and His Mother. Our author makes the following comment on the story: "You see that the worship shown to the image is referred to what is pictured, and how evil it is not to honor it [the image]; and further, how the devil preferred the cessation of this worship to lust." (1)

In the chapter on the Assumption, a word has already been said about the veneration of Mary's tomb. Angels and men honor it, and the latter obtain the most remarkable gifts from this cult. Toward the end of the first homily on the Dormition, our author says: "O holy, admirable and venerable monument, worthy of honor; (2) the angels, overcome with respect and with a great fear, surround you even now; the demons shudder; men approach with faith, honoring and worshiping you with their eyes and lips, and kissing you with love in their souls, and deriving an abundance of good things [from you]." (3)

There is one form of public worship of the Blessed Virgin which the Damascene rightly rejects. It is the

(1) *De Imag.* I (94, 1280A-D); *De Imag.* III, 13 (94, 1336 ff.)
(2) προσκυνητοῦ.
(3) 1 *Dorm.* 13 (96, 720B).

offering of small cakes to the Mother of God as a sacrifice. The heretics who derived their name, Collyridians, (1) from this practice, are mentioned in the Damascene's treatise against the heresies, (2) but their heresy is not refuted there. Our holy Doctor's insistance that God alone is to be worshiped with the cult of latria is a sufficient refutation.

Let us now pass on to the practices of private devotion to the Mother of God. In themselves, they may take a variety of forms. Those which are mentioned by St. John may be reduced to invocation, imitation, love and consecration.

Our author does not often directly exhort his hearers to call upon the holy Virgin in their needs, but his whole manner of speaking of her inspires confidence and his own example constitutes a powerful exhortation to call upon her help. She is "the hope of Christians", (3) the holy preacher's "only hope of joy." (4) He asks all manner of graces from her and explains the source of her power. (5) He insists on her goodness: she is the good Mother of the God of infinite goodness.

The imitation of Mary's virtues is a sure means of obtaining her favor. Purity and compassion to the poor are most pleasing to her. He thus exhorts his hearers to the practice of these virtues in the second homily on the

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(1) See Epiphanii, *Haeres.* 78, no. 23, 24, PG 42, c. 735-737; c. 739 ff.
(2) *De Haeres.* 79 (94, 728A).
(3) 1 *Nativ.* 11 (680A).
(4) Ibid. 12 (680B).
(5) See Ch. VII.

Dormition: "Let us praise her to-day with sacred canticles, we who have been enriched [with the grace] of being, as well as of being called, the people of Christ. Let us honor her by nocturnal stations; let us, by purity of mind and body, delight her who is truly chaste and in this respect surpasses all, save God alone; for it is natural that like and like should be pleasing to each other. Let us serve her by mercy and sympathy toward the needy. For if God is honored by nothing so much as by mercy, who would deny that His Mother is pleased by the same? She made known the ineffable abyss of God's love for us." (1) Later in the same homily, having told his auditory that Mary's grace was not circumscribed (by any consideration of time or place), St. John continues: "Let us, therefore, prepare our memory as a fitting receptacle for the Mother of God. But how shall we do this? She is a Virgin and a lover of virgins; she bore chastely (2) and is a lover of the chaste. If, therefore, we purify our memory together with our body, we shall obtain the grace of her indwelling [in our memory]. She flees all filth and turns away from the dangerous passions." The Damascene then mentions the hatred which Mary has for gluttony, impurity, improper words and songs, anger, envy, vanity, pride, and an unforgiving spirit toward those who have injured us. "She considers every vice as a deadly poison, but she is pleased with contrary [virtues]. For opposites are the remedies of their opposites. She delights in fasting, continence, and the singing of psalms. She is

(1) 2 *Dorm.* 16 (744B).
(2) ἁγνὴ πέφυκεν.

gladdened by purity, virginity and modesty; she maintains an eternal peace with them and affectionately welcomes them. She embraces peace and right sentiments; she cherishes charity, mercy and humility in her arms as her own protégés. In short, she is saddened by every vice, and gladdened by every virtue as her proper gift. Wherefore, if we energetically avoid the former vices, and cultivate virtues most zealously and make of them our companions, she will frequently visit her faithful servants, bringing with her the collection of all good things, as also Christ, her Son, the King and Lord of all, who dwells in our hearts." (1)

It may have been noted, that in the foregoing passage, St. John speaks of a kind of presence of Mary to our memory—something similar, we might say, to the presence of God. His brief words probably do imply a veritable spiritual "presence of Mary" to the minds of her most faithful servants, for such a doctrine was not unknown to the Greek Fathers of that period. St. Germanus of Constantinople dwells at length on this presence in his first homily on the Dormition. He says, for example: "For as, during your [Mary's] life on earth, you were not a stranger to the heavenly mansions, so neither after your departure, have you been prevented from frequenting men in spirit." After a few words he makes a still clearer statement, adding the reason for his belief: "For as you dwelt in the flesh with those of former times, so you live with us in spirit; (2) your great protection over

(1) 2 *Dorm.* 19 (752BCD).

(2) μεθ' ἡμῶν τῷ πνεύματι συνοικεῖς. S. Germani Patr., 1 *Dorm.* 2 and 3 (PG 98, 343CD).

us is an indication of your association with us." That the Damascene himself was worthy of the gift of Mary's presence, no one who knows his ardent love for her and his constant union with her will doubt.

We may judge somewhat of St. John's sentiments toward his heavenly patroness from the following introductory words of the third homily on the Dormition: "It is customary that those who are burning with love for something, always have it on their tongue, and mentally picture it to themselves day and night. Let no one, therefore, blame me, if after the two foregoing laudatory sermons, I offer this third one to the Mother of my God as a gift [in honor of] her decease... She does not need our praises, but we need the glory which comes from her. (1) For when a thing is full of glory, how can it be glorified? How can the source of light be illuminated? But we, by what we are doing, weave a crown for ourselves... What is sweeter than the Mother of my God? She holds my mind captive; she has ravished my tongue. I picture her [to myself] (2) day and night." (3) It is not surprising, then, that the enchanted preacher should cry out in the homily on the Nativity: "How shall I proceed? My mind is rapt out of itself; fear and love divide me; my heart palpitates; my tongue stammers; I cannot bear the sweetness; I am overcome by the miracles; I am under the sway of my feelings. Love is conquered, fear with-

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(1) τῆς παρ' αὐτῆς δόξης.
(2) φαντάζομαι.
(3) 3 *Dorm.* 1 (753A).

draws, the harp of the Spirit sings: 'Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad.'" (1)

Although St. John professes an ardent love for Mary, he does not call her our Mother. (2) He suggests this relation when he puts the words, "Do not leave us orphans," (3) on the lips of those who surround the holy Virgin's deathbed. Similarly, Mary, speaking to Jesus, says: "Be a consolation for my departure to my most dear children, (4) whom you were pleased to call brothers." (5) The words show a maternal solicitude, but we can hardly see in them a reference to the scene at the foot of the cross, (6) especially since the only reason suggested for Mary's calling the disciples her "children" is the fact that Jesus called them His "brothers". Owing to his great respect for the Mother of God, the Damascene prefers to call her Lady, or Mistress, and Queen. (7) It is one of these titles which he uses when asking her favors. He repeats this title when he urges his hearers to consecrate themselves to her. (8)

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(1) 1 *Nativ.* 2 (96, 664C); Ps. xcv, 11. Compare 1 *Nativ.* 11 and 12 (677D and 680B); 1 *Dorm.* 8 (712).

(2) Father VERCRUYSSEN, S.J., says: "Door dien titel van Moeder Gods is Joannes evenwel met zooveel eerbied bevangen dat hij niet durft Maria ook Moeder van de menschen noemen." *De Marialeer van den H. Joannes Damascenus*, p. 246.

(3) 2 *Dorm.* 8 (733D).

(4) τέκνοις.

(5) 2 *Dorm.* 10 (736C).

(6) TERRIEN sees a reference to the "Ecce filius tuus" in this citation. *La Mère de Dieu et la Mère des Hommes.* Vol. iii, pp. 73 and 270.

(7) See Chapter II, D, pp. 76 and 77.

(8) Blessed GRIGNON DE MONTFORT cites St. John Damascene amongst those who used the royal road of Mary to arrive at a close union with Jesus: *Traité de la Vraie Dévotion*, Luçon, 1918, P. II, ch. 2, art. 5, p. 111.

Love naturally gives rise to the desire of serving the person who is the object of our love. The Damascene consecrated his talents to the service of the Theotokos, and urged his fellow monks to do the same. Concluding the first homily on the Dormition, he thus invites his hearers to consecrate themselves to their heavenly Queen: "We are gathered here in your presence today, O Mistress, and again I say Mistress, Virgin Mother of God, to attach our souls to your hope as to an exceeding strong and unbreakable anchor; to consecrate (1) our minds, souls, bodies, our whole beings to you; to honor you with psalms and hymns, and sacred odes as much as possible —to do so worthily is impossible." (2)

Joined to the preceding expressions of our author's burning love for his heavenly Mistress, these words show us as ardent a devotee of our Blessed Lady as has ever lived. In the exercise of his public ministry, St. John Damascene honors Mary and spreads her cult; in his private devotion she constantly preoccupies his thoughts; she is the pattern of all virtues for him and his powerful patroness with God. May this shining example of a true devotion to Mary in the middle of the eighth century find many imitators in our own day.

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(1) ἀναθέμενοι.
(2) 1 *Dorm.* 14 (720C).

CONCLUSION

Heir to the Christological doctrines which the controversies of the preceding centuries had brought into clear light, St. John Damascene did not fail to see the important role of the Mother of Christ in the mystery of the Incarnation. The Divine Maternity is, without doubt, the central point of the holy Doctor's Mariology, the source whence all the other privileges of the Mother of God flow.

In the scanty details about Mary's life which are found in his writings, the Damascene is guided by the principle that she who was predestined to be the Mother of God should be second to none. In accordance with this principle, he accepts certain statements of the apocryphal "Gospel of James", especially regarding the character of St. Joachim and of St. Anne, but carefully rejects all extravagances. He gives a genealogy which makes the holy Virgin a descendant of David through Nathan, her immediate ancestors being Panther, who was a brother of Melchi, Barpanther, and Joachim. The origin of this genealogy is an open question.

The Doctor of Damascus gives a clear and complete exposition of the Divine Maternity, strenuously defending it against the Nestorians, and resolutely rejecting all false interpretations. As Spouse of the Father, Mary conceived by His good pleasure. The "Power of the

Most High", that is, the Son of God, overshadowed the holy Virgin and formed a body for Himself from her pure and immaculate blood. He accomplished this through the Holy Ghost who strengthened Mary lest she be harmed by the reception of the divinity of the Word.

The Divine Maternity is the source of Mary's surpassing dignity. Her Son is her most precious ornament; she has been raised above the cherubim, because God was made man through her. Mary is the glory of the human race, the Queen and Mistress of all creation.

In order to be a fitting Mother for God's eternal Son, Mary received a more excellent life than other mortals. She was born free from the original stain. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception has a twofold basis in the Damascene's writings. First, all his statements about the holy Virgin point toward her freedom from the ancestral stain; and what gives a special significance to this, is the fact that the holy Doctor has a sufficiently developed notion of original sin and its consequences. Secondly Mary's initial sanctity finds a firm basis in the Damascene's theory of generation. In conception, the seed of the man becomes the hypostasis to the blood of the woman. The body and the soul are formed at the same time. Thus, by advancing Mary's holiness to the moment of the conception, the Doctor of Damascus directly teaches the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God. If the other Greek Fathers on whom our author constantly bases himself had similar views on generation, their various expressions concerning Mary's initial sanctity have a far greater value than has

been heretofore attributed to them. The preliminary purification of which there is question in *De Fide Orthodoxa* and in other writings, implies, in accordance with a theory not uncommon among the Greek Fathers, an increase of positive purity, a greater sanctity. St. John Damascene, therefore, far from being an opponent of the Immaculate Conception, may be listed as one of the Fathers in whose writings the doctrine appears most clearly.

Already at her birth, Mary's sanctity exceeded all measure, for she was the object of God's eternal predilection. The holy Virgin was confirmed in grace by the conception of Christ. When she breathed forth her spotless soul into the hands of her Divine Son, she merited to be carried up to the very throne of God.

Exempt from Adam's sin when she entered the world; surpassing nature's laws by bearing a Child whilst remaining the purest of Virgins, Mary submitted to the universal condemnation of death, not from necessity, but in order to resemble her Son. As regards the circumstances of Mary's death, the Damascene shows the greatest hesitation. But when there is question of Mary's corporeal Assumption into heaven, he does not doubt. Her virginity, her Divine Maternity, her sinlessness, and her entire union with God make the corruption of her sacred body inconceivable. Three days after her death, her body was taken up to heaven, where she reigns with her Divine Son.

After Mary's Assumption, her tomb became the source of countless miracles. But the Damascene would not limit Mary's power by any consideration of time or place. Her

favors are now freely distributed to all who ask, for Jesus has submitted all things to His Mother. Consequently, she need not ask Him to help her clients, but she acts, as it were, by her own authority.

Because of her surpassing dignity, and because of the benefits she confers upon us, we must honor Mary above all the saints as the Mother of God. We must honor her images and celebrate her feasts with the greatest solemnity. We must invoke her aid, because she is powerful; we must imitate her virtues in order to draw her blessings upon ourselves; we must love her, because she is exceedingly amiable, and consecrate ourselves to her, binding ourselves to her as to an anchor of unfailing hope.

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Such, in brief, is the Damascene's Marian doctrine. Its completeness will surprise those who are not acquainted with the writings of the Fathers. Its value from the viewpoint of Tradition cannot be overestimated, for the Doctor of Damascus is the faithful echo of the teachings of the preceding centuries. Furthermore, this doctrine has the advantage of being built up on the background of a complete theological system. May this brief exposition of the Mariology of Saint John Damascene redound to the honor of the Queen whom he loved and served so faithfully.

GENERAL INDEX

Andrew of Crete, St. xiv, 2, 4, 6 f, 20, 84, 94, 144, 148 f, 154 f, 162, 169, 179.
Anne, St. 8 ff, 14, 74, 105; name 9, 76.
Annunciation 16 ff, 44, 82; feast 204.
Apocrypha 1, 21, 155 ff, 216.
Apollinarism 25, 28.
Assumption 138 ff, 218; feast 205 ff.

Bardenhewer xxii.
Basil, St. 129.
Bilz xiv, xxvii, 37 f, 44.
Birth without pain 33, 87; not *per latus* 33.
Bittremieux viii, xiv, 180 f, 184, 191.
Bover 170.

Christotokos 58 f.
Clement of Alexandria, St. 114.
Collyridians 210.
Conception 11; active principle 33 ff; through hearing 32 f, 85.
Consecration to Mary 214.
Coredemption 171 ff, 180.
Cornelius a Lapide 5.
Cult of Saints 195 ff; due to Mary 199 ff; of image 208.
Cyril, St. 62, 118, 170.

Davidical descent 3 ff.
Death, reasons for 111, 139; circumstances 147 ff.
Devotion to Mary 194 ff; public 203; private 210.
Diekamp xiii, xx, 57.
Dignity of Mother of God 65 ff; second to none 69.
Distribution of grace, 179 ff.
Dormition, use of word 144.
Dyobuniotis xxii f.

Eberle ix, xv, 2, 7, 62, 128.
Epiphanius, St. 81, 210.
Ermoni, xiv, xxii.
Eutychians 27; see *Monophysites*.
Eve, second 174 f.

Favier xv.
Figures 37, 66 ff, 78 f, 85 f, 88 f, 177.
Friedel xv, 114, 128, 174, 194.

Galtier 173.
Genealogy of Mary 2 ff.
Generation, Damascene's views 46 ff, 102.
Germanus, St. xvii, 94, 212.
Gordillo xiii, xvii, xix, xxiii f, xxvii.
Gospel of James 1 f, 9 f, 14, 21, 91, 216.
Grace, fullness of 105 f, 133 ff.
Gregory of Nazianzum, St. 6, 79, 118, 120 f.
Gregory of Nyssa, St. 16.
Grignon de Montfort 214.

Heer 6.
Holiness 126 ff, 218.
Holweck 205.
Hyperdulia 200 ff.

Icard 39.
Immaculate Conception 93 ff, 164, 217.
Intercessory power 184 ff.

Janssens xiv f, 1 f, 7 ff, 81, 112, 139, 155, 157 f, 160, 162, 174, 192.
Jerusalem tradition 147, 156.
Joachim, St. 5, 8 ff, 74.
John Damascene, St. Life xvii; importance vii, xxvii; works xix; devotion to Mary 213 f.

170762

Joseph, St. 91.
Jugie vii, xiii ff, xvii, xix f, xxii ff, 57, 117, 119 ff, 154, 160, 179.
Julius Africanus 6.
Jürgens 161.

Kellner xv, 94, 138.

Lagrange 148.
Langen xiv, xxi, xxii f.
Le Bachelet 114, 118, 120.
Leplus xxii, 20.
Lequien xxiii, 3, 27, 44, 60, 82, 152.
Lupton xxii.

Maas 6.
Marriage 4, 15 f, 91.
Mary, name 76; no goddess 24; life 1 ff, 108 f.
Maternity, Divine 22 ff, 217; spiritual 177, 214.
Mediation 170 ff.
μία φύσις 62.
Michel xv.
Modestus St. xv, xxvi, 103, 136, 148 f, 153 f, 157, 166, 169, 179.
Monophysites 26 ff, 60 ff.
Morgott xv, 31.

Nativity, feast 204.
Nestorianism 24, 46, 50 f, 53, 56 ff.
Neubert ix, xv, 27, 29, 81, 170, 174.
Niessen 7.
Nirschl xvi 156.

Original sin 95 ff, 217.

Panther 5, 7, 216.
Papebrock von 6 f.
Predestination of Mary 2, 65 f, 101.
Presence of Mary 212,
Presentation in temple 14.
Probatica 12 f.
Prudence of Mary 17, 132.
Purification 35 f, 114, 116 ff.
Pusey 102.

Queen 76 f, 182 f.

Rauschen xvi, 2, 160.
Redemption, mystical theory, 29, 171 f.
Renaudin xvi, 166.
Ryan 6.

Sanctity, see *Holiness*.
Scheeben xvi, 43 f, 48.
Sinlessness 126.
Sophronius St. xvi, xxi, 12, 15, 17 ff, 28, 44, 53 f, 107, 119, 129, 179, 208.
Spouse of Father, of God 39, 72 f, 216.
Stieffenhofer xiii, xix, xxii f.
Suarez 6, 32, 37.

Terrien xvi, 29, 39, 174, 214.
Theotokos (vs. Christotokos) 58 f; summary of mystery of Incarnation 64.
Thomas Aquinas, St. xvi, 31, 36 f, 40, 44 f, 56, 122, 135, 137, 201.
Tischendorf xvi, 155 f, 159.
Tixeront xxii, 97.
Tomb 152 f, 182, 186 ff, 209.

Valentinians, 26.
Vassall-Phillips xvi, 12, 118.
Vercruyssen xiv, 22, 93, 115, 124 f, 214.
Vincent et Abel 13.
Virginity 43, 88 ff; *ante partum* 83 ff; *in partu* 86 ff; *post partum* 89 ff; of soul 82, 106; vow 82.
Virtues of Mary 130.
Vogt 6.

Wiederkehr 158.

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